


VOICES FROM THE OPEN DOOR V1 (1912)



MARGARET SCOTT HOUTS

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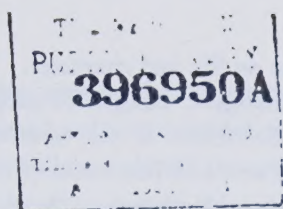
Voices From The Open Door V1

Margaret Scott Houts

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[Faint handwritten notes]

I Thess. iv. 13.



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PREFACE

Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and
no man can shut it.—Rev. iii. 8.

This is not a book of fiction drawn from the imagination; neither is it the relation of visions nor simply a literary production written by any living person on earth. It is a plain narration of facts as related by reliable, intelligent people who have laid aside their natural bodies and have passed into the inner world.

These experiences of life after death were dictated word by word to the inner ear of the person who recorded them while in a perfectly normal state of mind and body. They declare the Divinity of the Lord, the holiness of the Word and emphasize the necessity of a life in accordance with the Commandments. Their exalted religious and moral tone gives clear and strong evidence of their source and genuineness.

This book is submitted to the unbiased judgment of the Christian world. Investigation is invited. The facts set forth and their validity and usefulness should be tested by their agreement with the Opened Word, the revelations of the new age,

and their uplifting influence on life and character. These narratives are presented to intelligent, thoughtful people for the purpose of giving a clear conception of the value to them of forming right principles and true and just habits of thought and life. It shows, unmistakably, that these are the things which endure and determine one's future destiny. This book is not published for the purpose of securing honor or gain. Its sole purpose is to give to the world definite and true information concerning the state of man after the resurrection from the material body. It carries a message of comfort and hope for all those who mourn the loss of loved ones. The fear of death, held by so many, comes from the uncertainty of what may lie beyond. Definite knowledge of conditions where relatives and friends have gone, and where one, also, from the very nature of things, must soon expect to follow, will tend to greatly diminish this prevailing dread.

The Recorder, of these personal narratives of experiences in the next life, was Mrs. T. F. Houts, née Miss Margaret Scott. As a little child, she had a depth of reverence for the Bible and all sacred things, seldom seen in one of tender years. During all her life, she was an earnest and devoted seeker after the truth. She was not visionary. She was not imaginative. She was not what is called psychic. All who knew her life's history would testify to the fact that from early childhood to the close of her long earth life she was a very conscientious person of unusually well-balanced mind and character. She had, even from childhood, a great thirst for knowledge and a strong desire for a thorough education. From the time she entered the country school near her home, until she graduated from college, she had the confidence and respect of her teachers and fellow-students.

The year she graduated from college her teacher of Latin and Greek resigned and recommended her as the successor. The president of the college endorsed this recommendation. She had not sought the position, but gladly accepted it. After one year of teaching, she married the Reverend T. F. Houts, a popular and talented minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Several strenuous years of activity in church and home followed and then her health failed. One day, as she lay upon her bed, suffering more than usual, she could visualize nothing before her but the grave, with the old idea of the resurrection of the material body at some distant day, leaving her dear husband bereft and her little children motherless. In deep agony of soul, she lifted her heart in prayer. A remarkable answer came. The depths of her soul were lighted with a joy, peace and courage that were indescribable and she was told that she would live many years and would become the Lord's witness. In reply to her thought: "How can I witness for the Lord? I am not a writer or speaker," the answer came, "The way will open."

She arose and went to her husband, saying: "Do you think the Lord ever speaks to any one, now?" He saw her beaming face and replied, "Has He spoken to you?" She answered, "Yes, and I am not going to die and leave you; I am going to live many years." That was all she told him. The whole experience was to her so very sacred that she never again mentioned it to anyone until after her senses were opened on the spiritual plane in the year 1905. Then, she told me, her sister. Soon after this indescribable occurrence, however, her husband had told me that Margaret had recently had a very wonderful religious experience.

The Lord, in His Divine Humanity, could speak to Paul on his way to Damascus to persecute the church. Is His ability to communicate directly with the human race diminished by time? Could He not in this age answer the earnest, sincere cry of an humble-hearted disciple, a sincere follower that He was preparing for a specific work, preparing to be His witness, His instrument in bringing to this world, darkened by materialistic thought, the knowledge of the state of man after the resurrection from the material body?

No one who knew Mrs. Houts, at any period of her long life, would, for a moment doubt her testimony about anything. The following is her own statement concerning how she received the messages given in this book:

Statement of the Recorder of Voices from the Open Door

"It had, for many years, been my custom to devote about thirty minutes in the morning of each day to quiet thought and reading of the Word and what would make its meaning clear and practical, also hymns and selections that gave expression to the wants and longings of my heart. It was while thus engaged that I became conscious of a companionship, close and sympathetic, which grew more and more distinct, until I felt that my presence was recognized and made welcome. I could hear from within songs of praise and join in the Lord's prayer, and also, at times, hear parts of discourses.

"These experiences have come to me gradually thru my inner consciousness, and seem as wonderful to me as they are to anyone else, but I can have no doubt as to their origin, for it has been with the peace of the Lord's presence within and about me

that this consciousness was awakened and these conversations recorded."

The husband of the Recorder passed into the spiritual world in 1902. Her senses were opened on the spiritual plane in 1905. He had, before this time passed his judgment, and was engaged in his first work in the intermediate world, as leader of a society there. (See Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*, ch. 44.) It was the worship of this society that she became cognizant of in her morning devotions.

Her state was not a happening of chance, but the result of many years of interior spiritual discipline and development. About middle life she found the writings of Swedenborg which explain the internal sense of the Bible. Her disciplined, well-trained mind, combined with her deep love of the truth, enabled her to comprehend much of this. The Bible, reverently read, is the medium of conjunction between the Lord and heaven with the human race. By a long life of seeking after the truth, thru the reverent study of the Bible, and faithful obedience to its teachings, she so far came into harmony with angels and good spirits that she was capable of perceiving their presence and being instructed by them. This she regarded as a thing *very* sacred.

The Lord raised up and prepared His humble-minded, faithful servant to give to the world the testimonies of these His witnesses on the spiritual plane of life. Read these testimonies carefully with an unprejudiced mind, and judge for yourself whether they testify of and for the Lord and illustrate in their experiences His spirit and teachings. These testimonies

one of the things we have in this new age from the world of causes. The following quotation from Swedenborg is confirmatory of the Recorder's experiences:

"Man is created by the Lord so that during his life in the body, he is capable of conversing with spirits and angels, as, indeed, occurred in the most ancient times; for being a spirit clothed with a body, he is one with them."

And from the Word:

"There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." I Corinthians, xv. 44.

MARY A. FISH
{ MRS. EBEN FISH }
{ Wife of the Publisher }

SAN FRANCISCO
June 8, 1926

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This Book is a compilation of twelve separate booklets.

[Houts, Margaret J.]

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Voices from the Open Door

VOLUME ONE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

NUMBER ONE

CHAPTER I

"Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
Men are angels loaded for an hour."

Rev. Ernest Vinton*

To Former Friends and Parishioners:

I AM very glad to be able to speak to you, my friends, and tell you that I am in a real world, where people remember and love those who have shown true manhood. I was not expecting to find a world so much like the one I left and have had to unlearn many things I felt quite sure about. I am in an intermediate world that the churches know nothing about. It is not heaven or hell, but a place of preparation for the one or the other, just which one chooses to go to. I find that the angels come here frequently among the people to instruct and correct, and I am glad to find

*The person who gave this testimony was for nearly thirty years engaged in preaching what he understood to be "The Gospel of Salvation" in several states and places, as a minister of the Congregational Church. He had overcome great difficulties in securing the necessary education to prepare him for this work the pursuance of which he was earnest and sincere.

that these angels were once men upon the earth, and that they know how to sympathize with our ignorance and weakness. I am also glad to find that all here acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only God of heaven and earth.

THE AWAKENING.

My first introduction into this world was very pleasant.

I awoke refreshed and felt stronger than I remember to have felt in many years. My first impulse was to get up from the couch on which I found myself lying; and looking around for raiment, I saw near my head a man of gentle and lovely countenance, who smiled and bade me "Good morning." He asked if I felt refreshed and ready for a walk. I said, "I feel fine and will be glad to join you as soon as I am dressed." He pointed to clothing like that I had worn in the world and said I could have a bath if I desired. I saw a most inviting tank of water and made haste to take a plunge into it. It seemed to send thrills of life into every fiber of my body. After dressing I sought my companion and found him waiting at the door. He accosted me by asking how I had enjoyed my bath, and seemed much pleased when I told him, "Admirably." He said, "That is good news. Everyone does not find it so exhilarating." He asked me if I would like to make the acquaintance of my old townsman, Mr. Merrill.

I said, "He has been dead for many years. I cannot meet him until I too have died."

He said, "Would it startle you much to be told you are dead to the world you remember to have always lived in?"

I said, "It is absurd to ask such a question. I am not d. I was never more alive in my life than I feel today.

• • • • •

But I do not know just where I am. The place is not altogether familiar, but still it is pleasant and homelike, and I was about to inquire the name of the town, for I see many new buildings and some that look strange to me."

My companion answered that those were for some who had lately come among us, and said, "Let us go into one of these new houses."

I readily assented, and we went into one that looked very inviting. I said "I should like to own such a house as this. It is my ideal of a home."

He said, "Then we will not go any farther. You have found your home."

I answered, "I cannot stay here, for I have a family and work in the place I have lived and they will expect me back very soon."

He looked more concerned than I thought the occasion required, and said, "You cannot return to the world you have left. My duty requires me to tell you that you are in the world of spiritual beings who have left their bodies in the grave."

My surprise was only equaled by my delight. I always thought I would like to die without knowing I was going. I am sure many do know before they pass away that their time has come. I did not know this and was greatly relieved to be told that it was all over with me. I thanked the man who told me, and said, "I do not understand how this can be, for I have a body as I had before and have always believed that I must wait until the resurrection before my life would be complete."

He replied, "You have had your resurrection and have a body suited to the new state upon which you have entered."

"Where, then, are the members of my family? For they, too, must have died before the resurrection could have taken place."

He said, "They have not yet died. They are still in the world you have just left. They will not come for some time and then one by one."

I was amazed, and said, "Then I have been mistaken in regard to what the Bible taught about the resurrection of the body, and many other things I held fast in the world where I have lived and taught others."

He said, "Do not be grieved about that now, for many make the same mistake and you will be taught a better way to read your Bible than you have known. You tried to follow the light as you understood it, and it does not condemn you that you were mistaken."

MEETS HIS PARENTS.

I then addressed my companion by saying, "I desire to see my father. He has been here many years and must know about these things you have been telling me."

In a few minutes my father stood before me and asked who had called him. I said, "No one called you. But I said, I wished you would come and instruct me about this world where I find myself."

He made me come into his arms and fondled me as if I had been a child. I asked if he remembered me as his boy.

He said, "Indeed I do; and love you as when you knelt at my knees to say your evening prayer."

I was overcome with emotions of joy and fondly embraced his feet, saying, "This is more than I could even imagine, I am blessed beyond my fondest hopes." My

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father was equally moved and we rejoiced to
things were spoken of and recounted in our
him through the house that had been given
delighted that I had made such a home.

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My father called for my mother and we again
joys overflow. He then said I could make myself com-
fortable, and they would instruct me as to the laws of this
world in which I had come to dwell. "You will want to
know who made your coming known. It was an angel of
the Lord, he called me at your request."

I said, "I did not hear him call." My father replied,
"I heard him call my name, and I came at once and found
you here."

I said, "Why did I not hear any sound?"

He answered, "The call was not for you. In this
world, no one hears but the one called, and no one is heard
except those who call for some purpose well conceived and
defined."

LEARNS ABOUT ANGELS.

I learned from him that all angels were once men, for
he called the man who had made my advent into this world
so pleasant, an angel.

I exclaimed, "He is not an angel, but a man as you
and I are men."

My father replied, "I called him an angel because
there are no other angels but those who have been men up-
on the earth or some other planet."

Then I said, "That is another misunderstanding of
what the Bible teaches."

He observed, "There is little in the Bible but what has
been misunderstood, because men have read into it a mean-

“which was never intended.” He said further that all ^{the} came from being without a key to unlock the treasury ^{of} the Word of God; that man had become blind to the meaning of many things that were once known to the race, when the men of the church were open to heavenly instruction. Do not make the same mistake yourself by turning away from angelic instruction. He said I must become as a little child and make myself as embryonic as if I had just been born, without any pre-conceived opinions. I began to ask questions about many things and soon learned that my opinions were generally wrong. My father told me that God is not in three persons, but in one glorious Manhood in the person of Jesus Christ. My father said the angels knew no other Divine Person. I at once made my acknowledgments that I rejoiced to hear Jesus is Lord of all. My father was glad to hear me say this and replied, “That is the one gate to enter heaven.” He said that he was greatly ashamed that he had taught me any other way, because he might have known, if he had read the Word of the Lord correctly, that all that is said in the Bible is concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and his being the only Saviour.

THE JUDGMENT AND END OF THE WORLD.

My next question was about when the end of the world was to come, to which he replied, “The world you have just left is not to be destroyed, but is to remain forever, but the old state of things is to pass away and all things to be made new.”

Again I asked, “If the world is to remain, where is the judgment to take place?”

He said, “The judgment spoken of in Matthew’s Gos-

pel has already taken place in this world where you are now."

Then I said, "Who were judged?"

He replied, "All the Christian world gathered here since the incarnation of the Lord." My father also said that he had been judged and acquitted of wrong intentions when he came into this world, and that I also must have my intentions made manifest before I could live in heaven.

My father was a good man, but had to stay in this intermediate world many years. I am trying to make the most of my opportunities but I may stay here longer than he did, although I have better facilities for learning than he had, because this world has many more teachers now than then. I desire to do the will of the Lord in this and everything.

My father lives in the new heavens and said my home will be there also when I am ready to come to it. He is a young and strong man and my mother is a beautiful young woman—both much younger than when I last saw them on the earth.

FINDS A NEW TYPE OF RELIGION.

I am still with the friend I met through you and have been surprised and delighted with all I have experienced of kindness and with the opportunities given me to become acquainted with a type of religion I had never met before. These people are from different places in the world in which you live and were gathered here by the power of a spiritual attraction that operates freely in this world. My coming was from finding that I had little of the knowledge that he who invited me seemed to possess in great abundance. I found him ready and eager to give all that I

unity of God as embodied in the Incarnate Savior, and knew nothing of his teaching about the Sacred Scriptures. But I now learned from the angels that these were the foundation truths upon which the whole church must be built, if it is in harmony with heavenly order, and endure when the light from heaven falls upon it.

Question—Is the interpretation of the Bible by the Science of correspondence of material things to spiritual, essentially true?

Yes, it is the only way the Bible can be vindicated. My friend told me that you have read some of these books and were partially convinced of their truth, but that you thought there might be doubts about the opening of Swedenborg's eyes to see things hidden from others' sight; and that you had misgivings about the need of a church where the doctrines I have named were emphasized as of first importance. If my opinion is of any value after so short an acquaintance with these books, you are one of the favored ones of earth; for it is more important to know about the Lord Jesus Christ being God alone; that the Scriptures are His very Word to teach truths that lead to eternal life and how to read them—than all other knowledge.

MANY BELIEVE THEY ARE STILL IN THE NATURAL WORLD.

Since we last conversed I have met some newly-arrived that I had known in the natural world. Many will not believe that they are not still somewhere in that world until they see one they knew had passed into the world of mystery. They are sometimes greatly startled by coming face to face with one they believed dead, and exclaim in

great horror that they have seen a ghost. This method of convincing people is only resorted to when all other methods have failed.

Question—(Is it, then, really necessary for them to know?)

Yes, because they would make many blunders and involve themselves in worse mistakes if they were not convinced. My acquaintances were people who were much surprised that man lives still after he loses his body, and were greatly shocked at seeing me. They fled away at first and tried to hide. They cried out that they had seen many things they could not understand, but that my coming among them was the most mysterious of all. I spoke to them from a distance and tried to assure them I was their friend, and would make them understand things better if they would permit me to come near and speak with them. After a time I was allowed to approach much nearer and make myself known. When they saw and felt my person and perceived that I was a man in reality as I had been when they knew me before, I could then impress them with the fact of their own immortality, making my experience the basis for gaining their attention and confidence. They were not wicked in their intentions. You will be surprised when I tell you that there is repentance and salvation in this world as well as in that; but it is true. The Lord's hand is not shortened, my friends, by passing the life of the body. He manifests his love and care in this world more clearly than in that. Much that is said about the ways of God may be mistaken when they are made to apply to that world only, but become clear when made known in this world. My own ideas were all wrong in regard to natural life being the only opportunity given to

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man to prepare for Heaven. Many come here without any thought of life eternal—with no conception of God. Many get their first affection for spiritual truth in this world. Many are denied all knowledge of these things in the natural world, because they are not ready to improve such knowledge. Many are my acquaintances who heard, but did not understand what any of it meant. There is much need of instruction in the first principles of the Bible. Many get this here, who could not take it in that world. I rejoice it is so. What else could a loving Father do but lead the blind in this way to see the light. We all rejoice in this manifestation of the love of the Lord. Many could not otherwise be saved who long to know the truth that they may do it. Many come here who were brought up in ignorance and sin and who had little more mind than animals. You would be surprised to see how these sometimes look when uncovered in this world. Many have only the appearance of humanity. Many believe that such could not be saved and made into men and angels, but nothing is too hard for Infinite Wisdom and Love. Many grow very rapidly when they are freed from their evil environments, and make great progress in learning and goodness. Others do not grow so fast but after a long time they become more human and receptive. Many are lifted in the arms of angelic teachers and guided like infants. Many are made glad, like little children, with beautiful and instructive playthings, like those seen in the world. They are taught in this way that the Heavenly Father loves them.

The human race makes what seems to be slow progress in coming into a state of order where influx from heaven can operate without so great perversions as to injure and destroy the buddings of promise that occasionally

are manifest on the ultimate plane; for example, because openness of the spiritual world to the natural was once a source of mutual helpfulness, in disorderly conditions it becomes a snare to those who by magical devices seek to penetrate the realms of the invisible world.

Also the acknowledgment of the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of the Divine Love, which always operate for good, can be turned, in the perverted organism of man's will, into the infernal heat of self-love and self-seeking, and so directed as to present to outward appearance the *semblance* of true, heavenly activity; and therefore the influx is withheld, or rather, veiled, lest its ardor would destroy, in tender states of ignorance and innocence, the possibilities of future unfolding, when reception of truth would be conjoined with that of love.

THE GOAL—HOW REACHED.

I feel sure that no evil person can receive the truths of the New Church in heart and life. There must be complete giving up of self and sin before one can see that the Bible has a spiritual meaning, and that it treats of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. There are those who think they see these things, but if there is not this preparation, there cannot be internal acknowledgment and faith; which once received, the person is enrolled among the angels of the New Heaven, and though conflicts and darkness attend him, he cannot lose his hold upon eternal life. I know this to be true. All may not be conscious of this change in their environment, but, however it may seem, they move toward their final goal. I say this for the encouragement of any in temptation and sorrow. The Lord's face may be obscured by clouds, but it is never turned away from any

who long for His approval. I hope to be prepared to help my friends who come here in need of help. The love of usefulness grows stronger as we come into harmony with heaven.

I have great joy in the work of instructing others, as I myself have been taught the wonderful revealings of the love and wisdom concealed in the letter of the Holy Word, and gradually perceived as it finds fulfillment in the experiences of those obeying its precepts.

I have only this to add, that while so many that are very dear to me are in the natural world and engaged in its activities, I shall probably remain where I am in the intermediate World, learning and teaching, and intensely interested in the progress of the church on earth, through whose agency alone can true light flow into the darkened understandings of men.

THE FAREWELL.

To the dear friends, by whose means these conversations came about—conversations which have proved to be the means by which both they and I were brought into new associations that have proved to be turning points in our on-going—I send cordial greetings and assurances of my continued interest and affection.

•

“They are not dead! they have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here
Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.”

—John L. McCreery.

CHAPTER II

An Author's Testimony*

"There is no death
What seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of life elysian,
Whose portal we call death."

—Longfellow.

I AM ready to begin a narrative that I hope will be useful to some persons to whom it may come as a message from heaven.

I had a very imperfect knowledge of the heavenly world while I lived on the earth. The teachings of the church to which I belonged were indefinite and unsatisfactory, as are the teachings of the whole Christian world, with one exception. I had many vague longings to be holy and fitted for a life I believed to be superior to anything that could be realized during my life on earth. To attain this, I united with a church in which I found the most zeal and warmth of any in my acquaintance. I attended its services, joined in its efforts to save myself and others from becoming engrossed in the pleasures of the world. These did not appeal to me as they do to some, so it was not a great sacrifice to decide against the popular amusements of the time in which I lived. I preferred quiet pastimes, and intermitting hours of study and em-

*The Second Narration is given by a woman known and loved by many within and outside the Methodist Church, of which she was a member. She was the author of several small but very popular books, to one of which reference is made in this recital:

ployment. I read my Bible regularly and many other religious books.

Always of frail constitution, I had frequent illnesses and these brought the thought of death and judgment before me and made me tremble lest I should not be prepared to meet them. I sought earnestly for the witness of the Spirit that I was accepted and saved. This evidence was graciously granted me in answer to many prayers and much striving to prepare my heart to receive this gift, intending to do whatever I was shown to be the will of my Saviour.

The doctrines of the church did not trouble me. I thought they were drawn from the Bible, and so read that in the light of what I heard taught in the pulpit and by reading. I now see that this child-like state was a preparation for my future experiences and saved me from becoming confirmed in the common falsities of the Christian churches. I made what preparation I could for becoming a useful woman wherever I should be called to live and work. My acquisitions were not great in the way of learning, and I had few ambitions. The love of my husband opened a new world of thought and feeling and I was very happy in my married life, in spite of the severe illnesses that frequently interfered with our plans. I now see that these might have been avoided, had I understood the relation of mind and body as seen from this side. I have made myself get out of bed at the time of prayer, when I fainted in the effort, until I came to understand the nature of prayer and of my Saviour's love for His children. I have often gone to church when I was too weak to sit up, because I thought it was right to sacrifice myself for the sake of others. These extremes I now see were not of the Lord's imposing, but contrary to the indications of His

Providence that suggests quiet when the body does not respond to the wishes of the mind in some degree of comfort to both. The body is the servant, but should be treated with due consideration.

PURIFICATION THROUGH SUFFERING.

I will not dwell on my sufferings, for out of them I have now been delivered, and they were the means of cleansing my mind of many false notions that would have clung to me through life. One of these was that the body of flesh is necessary to conscious life. This I knew by experience could not be true; yet it was a part of the faith I was taught. I knew also that my marriage was not to end with the death of the body and that my husband would be mine forever.

I knew also that the world within, or rather above, was not far away and that the angels were with me in sleep and in suffering. I knew, too, that the Lord Jesus spoke to my heart and showed me that He is Love itself and that I could not be lost. Oh, how blessed I felt myself to be in this assurance!

MATERNAL AFFECTION AUGMENTS SPIRITUAL LOVE.

I now come to a time of peculiar trial and peculiar joy—the birth of my first baby. Never, it seemed, had there been so great need of trusting in the Lord and so great delight, when the danger was over and we had our son in our arms. But the main point was that I had no conception of the love of the Lord before as it came to me then; and this conception increased as my love for my child increased, and I understood how impossible it would be for the Lord's love to fail toward any of His children,

and that He must of necessity bring them all, at some time and in some way, to a state of blessedness. So, in my distress over the sin and sorrow of the race, I have ever held fast to the hope that Infinite Love and Wisdom would find a way out of the disorder to bring salvation to all. This hope I still cherish, in spite of the sin that invests your plane of life with so great darkness.

Thus was born in me the assurance that my son would be saved forever. And so in regard to the sincere friendships of life. Nothing good is lost, but all the time increased and made more satisfying. How glad I am that on this side I can speak back to the weary ones of earth and say, "The Lord makes all things right." No matter how dark may be the shadow, the sun behind it is fraught with blessing. This is much clearer to the angels than to us in the intermediate world.

I wish to say that all this comes to me very clearly as I come back into the plane of natural thought that permits me to speak the language of earth again.

THE DREAD OF DEATH REMOVED BY A VISION.

I have much to tell about the steps that led me to write the little book that has had so wide a circulation, because it was a matter of personal experience, and what one feels to be true herself finds a response in other hearts. I had been ill a long time, and the things of heaven drew near as the earth receded from my view. I was so conscious of this that nothing troubled me in regard to what the future might bring. My only care was to be ready to meet the change called death, about which I had no definite ideas. Not that I did not expect to be saved, but the indefiniteness of what it would bring created a dread until I saw in

vision the homes of friends I had known and loved and to whom I talked with such satisfaction and freedom. I will not dwell on this, as I do not wish to call attention to this vision, but to describe the real experiences I have passed through since I left the earth no more to return.

THE AWAKENING AFTER DEATH.

I was surprised to awake and be free from all suffering, for this had not been a common thing for many years. I lay still for some time in contemplation and thankfulness that I could think clearly and not be conscious of weariness, asking myself if I could hope to get really well and be useful in the church. This was my first thought of health—how I could help to serve in the church. Soon I opened my eyes and saw the sweet face I had often seen in vision bending over my bed and smiling. She bade me welcome to my home and the happiness of heavenly peace and rest. I wondered what she could mean, and said, "Am I not in my own home and in my own bed where I have lain so long? I feel stronger since I slept and hope to sit up after a little."

She replied, "I will assist you to rise and bathe in this tank of water and then you may try to dress and walk about."

I answered, "That is impossible, unless by some miracle I have been restored to more than my usual health."

She replied, "You have been restored by means of the miracle of the resurrection out of the body of dead substances into the realm of living substances where death is not known. This is come to pass while you slept and you will be sick no more, nor faint nor weary."

I thought I was in a vision again and said, "How de-

lightful it is to be free from suffering a little while, even if I must return to it again!"

She said, "You are free indeed now and will not return to the earth life ever again."

Then I said, "I can see Jesus and my husband and the heavenly Father and be in heaven among the angels;" for I was still in the old thought about God and heaven.

My angel friend did not correct my mistaken ideas, but assisted me to arise and bathe and dress myself. The water seemed to put new life into every fiber of my body, which I noticed was not thin and wrinkled as I expected to see it, but full and fair as in my girlhood. I thanked her and said, "I feel strong enough to walk out in the air and will enjoy it so much, if you will kindly go with me."

She consented and we went into the street that I had seen in vision and to the house of my parents. But before going far, my husband caught me in his arms, exclaiming, "Welcome, dear, dear wife, to the home of your vision and the happiness of heaven! There is to be no more sickness nor parting hereafter forever."

FINDS HOME AND LOVED ONES.

I will not dwell on the meeting with loved ones, nor the beauties of the world into which I had entered. They are more than mortal can conceive; but will rather give experiences that might be useful to those who wish to be prepared to enter and abide in this blessed country.

I was brought to the first plane of the second heaven and found my home among my own family and relatives, surrounded by scenes of grandeur such as the favored spots of earth feebly portray, with nothing to mar the beauty, as is always the case on earth; no sign of sin or sorrow. I was delighted and refreshed by constant surprises

in the way of meeting old friends and in beholding new manifestations of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN IN THE INTERMEDIATE WORLD.

Just when I had the first glimpse of my imperfections in the way of preparation for the life in this blessed land, I can hardly describe in the language of earth. Every one whom I met had some use to perform and no one seemed to lack employment fitted to his and her talents. When I asked what work I was to have, my father told me that every one had instruction in the intermediate World, unless he had found the light of the internal sense of the Word of the Lord while in the Natural world.

I said I did not stop in that world, because I found Jesus on earth and learned to love Him and the Bible. But I soon found that I needed light on many questions, and that my thought of God was not the same that I heard in songs and sermons and prayers; so I had many questions to ask about the meaning of the Bible; and after a little time I was directed to go into a school in the intermediate world, where I became acquainted with friends who read the Word in the letter and had also books that gave the internal or spiritual sense. This explained the difficulties I had met; and later I was invited to join the class that read the book of Revelation with you. This has been a great help in connecting the natural and spiritual planes of thought and I am full of wonder that the church in the natural world take so little interest in the study of the wonderful truths that are revealed to them alone of all the people of the earth. I wonder, when heaven is so near, that they fear to die and are so absorbed in gaining the poor, transient wealth of earth, when the internal culture would open such vast treasures and give what would endure forever. Houses are builded and furnished while the owner, all unconscious, toils to bring his mind and heart under

obedience to the Divine commands, as he understands them ; and many in blindness and sorrow are rearing beautiful mansions and furnishing them with treasures of art and emblems of victorious struggles.

WHAT CONSTITUTES HEAVENLY LIFE.

There are many others that feel so sure they are on the road to heaven, that really know nothing of the nature of heavenly life, and are surprised and overcome with disgust that others they despised are received among the angels, while they wander about in tattered garments and live in hovels. This is not an uncommon occurrence ; and I have heard some say that among these are the learned in theology and science. I have seen these men and women turn with scorn from those who told them about the light of heaven being from the internal sense of the Bible, saying that there is no more light in that than in any other book that tells how man should live. I have seen the same later confess their blindness and beg some one to teach them the right way to read the Bible. There is no help for mankind but in seeing and confessing their errors. That is one point I wish to make clear and strong. It is no kindness to any one to make light of what is called a small dishonesty in word or deed. The better way is to exact justice from others, so as to give them the advantage of forming just habits and ideals by doing the right thing in small as well as large matters.

I had many opportunities of making friends while studying the internal sense of the Word in the intermediate world (and among others the members of your family and friends who had known you in that world). The friendships of earth are continued here when founded on true principles in that world, and become sweeter and stronger because they enter into spiritual relationships that bind us to eternity.

THE FIRST GREAT LESSON—THE UNITY OF GOD.

I will now give you some account of the lessons I had to learn. The idea of three Divine Persons was so woven into all the teachings of the churches with which I was acquainted that I had not supposed it possible they could be mistaken and though it was Jesus that answered my cries of distress and I had thought of Him alone as My Saviour and Redeemer, there was also the idea of a greater than He—One whose wrath consumed evil doers unless Jesus interposed and pleaded in their behalf. This thought followed me into the intermediate world when I returned into my former way of thinking and it was after I met you and read in the book, *Apocalypse Revealed*, where this is made so prominent that I learned about the Divine Humanity being One with the Father that I could keep my thought fixed on the Lord as Jehovah and Saviour. Now it is the joy of my life to acknowledge this as the greatest of all truths and the door into heavenly peace.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE EARTH.

Another great lesson was that the world will not be destroyed, but that heaven rests on the earth as upon a foundation. This is not apparent to men on earth nor to those in the intermediate world, nor in heaven—the planes are so distinct; but it is true and shown in such ways that no doubt remained. I cannot better describe in the language of earth how this is than is said in the writings of the church of the New Jerusalem; but there it is clearly stated and you need no other proof. This my word can only confirm that.

I now come to the Word as the light of heaven. This is also taught and repeated many times in the writings of the church. I loved to read the Bible in the natural world

but got no idea how much there is I did not understand. It is like a great ocean is to one drop of water.

FEELS NEED OF INSTRUCTION.

I now return to my experiences after I came into the world of spirits, after being in the first plane of the second heaven. I had rested and been refreshed after my trying experiences in the natural world, and been informed as to many things that were different from the way I had been taught, and then given time to think out the problems involved. I saw clearly that I must begin at the beginning and learn everything from a new standpoint, and that this would require time or change of state, to which time corresponds; and teachers who understood my needs; and therefore I must be in a school such as is found in the intermediate world, and asked my father to direct me to such a place—so much like the life in the natural world is this in many respects.

ENTERS A SCHOOL.

My father responded to my desire by calling in thought for a guide who conducted me to a house surrounded by a group of buildings, in one of which I found a home and friends to assist me in my studies until I gained enough knowledge to search for light from other teachers. As there is a great variety in the forms that adorn the face of nature, so there are many shades of perception that inspire the exercise of the intellectual faculty in acquiring the various degrees of knowledge.

Another lesson I learned in the intermediate world was that the character is changed very slowly and with effort on the part of persons who had reached maturity in the natural world. This was not the teaching of my church and caused me much surprise and concern when I considered how many form habits of thought and life that must be changed if they are ever in harmony with the laws of or-

Another lesson was that what man acquires in the natural world remains in his memory and can be recalled at any time, though he may not have thought much on the subject at the time.

July 10th.—It is many weeks since I gave you what is written above, and I want now to say that it is correct in every particular, and to add that changes in state are not made with less difficulty here than there. The mind receives instruction in the same way or ways, from teachers and books—from conversation, observation and reflection. Nothing is made our own but by appropriation and effort. Still, we have many advantages in all these things. Our bodies respond at once to the desire of the will and act in union with the understanding. There are not the impediments in the matter of overcoming distance. There is more freedom in expressing our thoughts and less difficulty in understanding thoughts of others, especially when illustrated or imaged before the eyes, as is frequently done. The schools are conducted much like those for similar purposes in the natural world, only no one is hindered for lack of means, all things being given gratis to any one who desires them for the purpose of use or being useful. So also the power of movement. If one desires the presence of another, he is almost at once present with him; nor is he conscious of having changed his place.

July 13th.—Yes, dear Mrs. H.—I am here to continue my narrative of experiences in the intermediate world.

The reason why I was not sent there when I came into heaven was that through much struggle and distress, I had been led to follow the light as I was given to see where it led, without consulting my natural inclinations, or wishing to do as the world, or even the people of the church with whom I was associated, for the most part did; but I prayed to the Lord Jesus to guide me and help me to do and to

bear whatever in His wisdom he saw necessary to my final salvation; for I realized that I needed discipline and instruction to be freed from selfish desires and the love of the world. When I was freed from my weak and suffering body, my first impulse was to thank Jesus for my deliverance and to do his will in all things; therefore I could not be anxious or troubled or seek to find happiness in any other way, and so I was in harmony with angelic life so far as my willingness to do the Divine Will is concerned; and also I was willing to be taught in His way the much I had to learn to be prepared to associate intelligently and be at home with those with whom I hoped to live.

The study of spiritual truth was delightful to me; also the companionship of my teachers and others whom I met and with whom I learned to apply these truths to the uses of life, for there are many ways in which we can be of use to those newly introduced into this world, and also to those with whom we are to dwell permanently—those of like affection. I am still in alternating states of learning in the intermediate world and putting into practice what I have learned there, and in my beautiful and happy home, where I enjoy the companionship of my husband and the friends who are nearest and dearest, some of whom I knew on earth, and many gathered from—I might say—the four quarters of the globe. It seems strange that any one of good intentions who believes the Bible should dread the change called death and should not rather look to it and prepare for it as a delightful home-coming and re-union with all that can be imagined of blessedness and joy.

This is the message of one who has had experiences on both planes of life, to those who linger below, and in the enjoyment of all that earth can give. Good bye.

August 1st.—I have nothing to add to this narration and no correction to make. The Lord will show you the way it is to be given to those for whom it was intended.

CHAPTER III

Walter J. Worth*

I AM most happy that there is someone to whom I can speak on that side. I am more astonished than I can begin to express, at the condition of things here; and to think no one in the world, at least no one I had knowledge of, would listen to anything told them. All were afraid of one who professed to know. But I hope it will not be so very long, and then if people knew, if they would believe, all this horror and mourning over the death of a friend, would cease.

MEETS FATHER, MOTHER AND FRIENDS.

I have found my father and mother, in new conditions, to be sure, but the same kind of people—changed, as all must and ought to, and on the whole for the better.

But Lucius! I had no idea he was so fine a man. He has not been here long, but he is well called “the universal helper.” If I can ever become anything like him, I shall be more than satisfied.

I am learning—as yet not much—except that I did not know anything right until I came here.

*Walter J. Worth lived on the earth plane for more than sixty years and was from early manhood a loyal member of the Methodist Church, having recently passed into the Spiritual World, he is greatly surprised and pleads that light should be sent out to free people from the fear of death and to warn the careless.

Having had a limited literary education in this life, the reader will note his simple style and diction in contrast with the foregoing communications.

BLIND GUIDES.

Why is it that the ministers there are such blind guides? They seem to think they know all that is to be known, when they are only misleading people.

I am soon to go into a school and begin at the a, b, c, and learn how to read the Bible, and from that understand myself and everything else.

IS INCREDULOUS.

When I first came and was told that I was in the spiritual world, I would not believe it, until I saw my friend, Lucius, and he said he thought the same until made to see how things really are, and then he was so filled with astonishment and joy, that he was like one in a dream, and that most people who come here, pass through something of the same experience. At first they are incredulous, then so relieved and glad that everything is so pleasant and natural, and that they can choose their own life and friends. Of course, there is much to be learned, and there are dark places and evil people who would lead one wrong, but there is also everything to help one who wants to do right.

NEED OF INSTRUCTION ON EARTH.

I have sought again the opportunity to have a conversation with you in regard to some things that have come to my knowledge since I had the privilege, some time ago, to express my surprise and pleasure at being able to converse with any in that world, in an intelligent manner. Lucius tells me the cases are rare, so I prize it all the more. The matter about which I specially wished to speak, is to call attention to the great need there is in the earth, for instruction in the real meaning of the Bible. While the books

are there that tell about it, there is such a blind prejudice against the very name of the writer, and all who read the books, that little impression is made on the masses, either within or out of the so-called Christian churches.

THE WAY OPENED.

We, here, long and pray, that some way may be opened to get this subject before the public. Surely many will listen if the subject is presented in a form that appeals to the affections through the reason; and the interest shown in various ways and by many classes of people in finding a solution for the difficult things in the Bible and in what are called "the dispensations of Providence," would indicate that the world is being prepared to receive an explanation that answers the longings to know the why and the how it is that things are in such a tangle and when and where the mystery will be revealed.

LONGING TO GIVE LIGHT.

It is granted me, by the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, the great privilege to continue what I began to say some time ago in regard to the longing there is on the part of all here who love mankind and desire to alleviate their sorrows, that people in the natural World should be informed, in a way to secure their attention and gain their confidence, in regard to the inner world that is all about them and into which one by one they are continually coming.

It is not only because of the anxiety and fear by which many are tormented because of this inevitable ending of all the hopes and plans for which they live, but more that they may be induced for themselves and for the children

future generations, to order their lives with the end in view, of being prepared for citizenship in a world of immaterial substances, where what you are, the feelings and thoughts you cherish give form to the world about you with quick and unerring certainty. No effort at concealment hides from angel eyes the selfish motive, the unclean thought, the purpose of deceit. Each is pictured in the face and takes living form in animal and vegetable life.

If young people, before evil habits are confirmed could only form any conception of this uncovering!

TRUSTS ALL TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

But in the face of this earnest longing, I am reminded that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all His works, and that in His own good time and way He will lead all the creatures He has made. That this longing on our part is a prophecy of what is to be, I am also assured.

"There is no death! although we grieve
When beautiful, familiar forms
That we have learned to love are torn
From our embracing arms."

"And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear, immortal spirits tread—
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead!"

—John L. McCreery.

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER IV

"What a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. 6: 7.

The Search for Pleasure

A Relation by

GILBERT S. SEVILLE*

I will begin by saying that I am more delighted than I can express to have this opportunity of speaking to one whom I knew and esteemed when we were neighbors in El Paso. I have come through much tribulation into a state where it is pleasant to meet the friends whom I knew in the natural world. For a long time I had no desire to see any one I had ever seen before; for I was conscious of being in a condition that would disclose a poverty and distress which I wished to conceal from all human gaze. I can only speak of it now because it is past; and out of it

*He had lived in this world for more than sixty years, without any definite purpose to guide his life.

has come a humility of spirit that is willing to be abased in order to acknowledge the goodness of my Saviour and Redeemer, and the kindness that I have received from His servants, who relieved my distresses and assisted in every way possible when I was made willing to accept their aid.

This, and also that my experiences may be a warning to some who are bent on having their own way, and following their own devices in spite of admonitions and warnings, rejecting the opportunity of building for themselves noble mansions, and acquiring riches which will increase and endure throughout eternity.

To make my narrative clear, I must go back even to my childhood. I was brought up in a home where the Bible was revered and read daily by rather strict parents, who insisted on my going to church and Sabbath school, keeping the Sabbath and avoiding cards, places of amusement, novels and idleness. For all these things which I was taught to shun, I had a strong craving,—except the last, idleness. I wanted to be busy about something.

As soon as I was away from the home influence, I threw off restraint and really enjoyed the prohibited recreations, all of which as I now see may be innocently indulged in moderation, and for rest and relaxation. No reason had been given for the prohibitions, only that they were wicked and that God would punish all who broke his commandments. My reason had never been appealed to in matters of religion, nor any attempt made to explain the Bible in a rational way.

In my early manhood, there was presented to me a system of truth which gained the assent of my understanding, but demanded more of surrender than my will was

ready to consent to ; so while I commended it to my friends, I gave my energies to secular business and worldly delights, such as my circumstances and the surroundings afforded. I was not grossly immoral, but was not controlled by spiritual motives.

Though changes and vicissitudes came with added years, and unrest and disquiet within produced corresponding effects upon business and family relations, I was not attracted towards spiritual and heavenly truth as a means of relief, but resorted to stimulating drinks and diversion of thought from serious subjects to relieve my depression. I did many foolish and reckless things, and was kept within bounds by the influence of my wife more than any other. When about threescore and ten, bodily and mental strength failed, and I passed into a state of oblivion.

It would not be useful to dwell longer on that side of my life. The particulars are not inspiring nor instructive ; only I hope this general statement may be of use in showing that what men are apt to think lightly of, may be fraught with gravest interest.

FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE NEW WORLD. IS WELCOMED BY HIS MOTHER.

I was not conscious during my last hours on earth, and entered this world as one awakens from a long, deep sleep. Before opening my eyes, I felt a presence strong and sweet about me. I lay quiet for some time trying to think, but passive, and with a little wonder as to whether life went on and on, never ending, and what it meant to live forever. After some time a gentle hand touched my face,—it seemed with a soft, moist cloth, and wiped something off

my eyes, which I then opened; and looking up, I saw the gentle face of my mother, as I had seen it as a child, only much more tender; and smiling, she bade me "Good Morning," and said she was glad to be the one to welcome me into a higher and better state of life than I had known before.

The past seemed to fade out of my sight, and I put out my hands as if to be taken in her arms, and said, "How sweet you look, mother; and how glad I am to see and be with you again. It seems as if I had been away from you a long time, and had bad dreams that I do not remember."

She soothed me and said, "We will not now try to recall them, but accept the glad present and trust for the future."

We then conversed for some time about my early life and the friends of my boyhood and early manhood; and at length my mother said, "Would you not like now to rise and dress and look about you a little?"

I said, "Yes, indeed; where are my clothes?"

She pointed to clothing in the room, and said I would find water in which to bathe, behind a screen she designated, and left me to make my toilet. I arose at once and went to the water; but though it looked clear, and provisions for a bath were at hand, I did not feel inclined to make use of them, even to wash my face; but turned to the clothing and selected what seemed to suit my purposes, and was soon dressed, and opened the door to go out. My mother looked disappointed when she saw me, but said nothing, and we walked in silence for some distance.

At last my mother said, "If you had your life to live over again, how would you begin and in what place would you prefer to live? Among christian people, where the

laws require a man to live soberly and orderly, attend church and learn the laws of a truly spiritual life? Or do you think there is happiness in going contrary to the order that you were taught to respect in your childhood and that of later years, by the example of the best people you knew?"

"Well," I said, "I am not used to going to church; and the conduct of a good many religious people doesn't recommend religion very highly. Of course I prefer the company of decent people, and believe in obeying law; but as to binding myself down to anybody's notions about order or religious observances, I would prefer some place where a man is free to choose his own likings in these things. I have great respect for the Bible, but have not read it much since I was a child. I am inclined to try the world a while longer before giving much attention to preparation for the future world."

Of course I was not awake in the sense of realizing my relation to my mother as one of a long past; but like one in a dream I spoke from a present consciousness, and that was in order that I might for myself and others be made aware of the state of my affection for goodness and truth.

I had not realized, either, that I was in a different place from where I had lived when I had conscious life, so gradual was my introduction into the new world, where I had the opportunity given me to begin to amend. Now I began to notice that things about me were not such as I had been familiar with, and I asked, "What place is this? Is this where I am to live? And who brought me here?"

My mother said, "How soon can you be ready to go home with me? I have a place for you, if you will be

content with my style of living. You have been out West and may not like our sober ways."

This made me reflect as to where I had been, and how I came to be with my mother again. I thought for some time, and gradually my memory returned. I said, "Things seem strangely mixed in my mind. I have some remembrance of going West and of a wife and children that I claimed, and a home and business in a city not so large as this, but of good size, where I lived and had many friends. But it may be I was dreaming; or am I dreaming now that I see my mother, who has been dead these many years? I know I must be dreaming; for now I remember distinctly that my mother died many years ago, and my wife comforted me, saying I would see her again, young and beautiful; but I did not think that could be until I, too, died. But this is surely my mother, and young and beautiful, as Louise said."

"Yes, my son, I have come to bid you welcome to the home where you, too, may become young and strong again, if you are ready to profit by the past and begin a life of true order."

"That depends," I said, "upon what you call a life of order,"—speaking again from my interior thought, without considering where I was or whom I was addressing. "If what you mean by true order requires a man to give up all the pleasures of life and live according to fixed rules, afraid all the time of offending the laws of the church, I prefer a worldly life, as I said before. I don't want to lie or steal or cheat, if I can get along without; but generally a man has to look pretty sharp or some fellow will get the better of him, and then he has to fight the devil with his own weapons."

It was answered, "I did not mean a life that requires any fixed rules that are imposed from without, but whether you are ready to accept the law of loving God above all things and your neighbor as yourself, as the rule to go by, and make other things serve these when any question is to be settled as to your conduct."

"That sounds reasonable," I said, "and if things are not too hard, I will try to go by that. But how am I to know just what is the right thing to do? In many cases one church teaches one thing and another something quite different. My wife—," and here I seemed to waken again, but went on, "used to read books that seemed the most reasonable of anything I ever met; but the people wrangled over some things that didn't amount to much, and I gave up trying to understand what it was all about; though I think it would have been better for me to have done as Louise wanted me.

"But that is all past and here I am,—I hardly know where, or how I came; and you ask me to begin now and love God and my neighbor. Who is God, anyhow; and where are the people I am to love?"

"God," my mother answered reverently, "is the One Life-giver and source of good to all created beings. He is not visible unless the soul longs to see Him; but He is near to us always and will reveal Himself to anyone who desires His presence and help. I hope you will remember this in all the trials that I see you must pass through before you get into heaven."

"Into heaven!" I said. "I have no desire to get into heaven these many years. I feel young and stronger than I have for some time. Let us go where we can have some good music and maybe have a dance."

I turned to look at my companion, but there was no one beside me, nor anywhere within my view. This startled me, and I rose and looked around; for we had been sitting in a resting place under the shade of a tree with wide-spreading branches.

"Where am I and what does all this mean? Was this indeed my mother who had been talking to me, and had she come from heaven to warn me that I am soon to die? If that is the case, I am afraid I did not answer her very politely or kindly. It must all have been a dream. But where am I? And how did I get here?"

"You have made the change called on the earth *death*, but here called *birth*. You are now a spirit and in the spiritual world, of which you did not think a great deal in the life of the body," answered the voice of a man near me; and turning, I saw a fine looking stranger quite close to me.

I gazed at him in wonder for some time after he had ceased speaking, and then he proceeded to say; "Since you are, as you see, in a strange country, I have come to offer any assistance you may desire and to answer any questions you may wish to ask."

I hesitated a few minutes and he then said; "All are made welcome who come here and every want has been foreseen and provided for by the Heavenly Father, who, loves all His children, and only asks that His bounty be accepted and enjoyed in common with whomever may need our sympathy or assistance. For in this world everyone desires the happiness of others as much or more than his own."

"Then I cannot have anything for my own!" I exclaimed. "Not even my own clothing or house to live in?"

"Everything you need will be provided, as I said; but it is the gift of the common Father to all His children alike. We cannot earn anything, since all belongs to God and is a gift from Him, and is received on this condition, that no one claims anything as his own, but is willing to share as others have need."

"Then there is no security to property and no incentive to acquire it," I answered. "I think I like the old way better, even if a man had to work and struggle to acquire possessions,—he had the satisfaction of knowing they really belonged to him, and that he could leave them to his children when he was done with them."

"But," was answered, "if the children, too, are provided for out of the common bounty, why should one wish to hold things in his own name or under his own control?"

"If one could only be sure of that," I answered, "then of course there would be no need of providing beyond one's own needs. But you said that is provided, too, on condition that one holds it ready to give away at any time. Then it is mine no longer than it is not wanted by any one else. If another should claim my house at any time, then I must be ready to move out."

"All that is also provided," was answered. "Every one is best suited with his own house and could not be prevailed upon to live in another. Come with me and choose for yourself a home among these new buildings."

FINDS A PLEASANT HOME.

There appeared before us a wide and attractive street, with trees (maple) on either side; and among the commodious houses was one that was especially beautiful. I stopped in front of it and exclaimed, "If I could have

a choice, there is a house and grounds that are just to my liking and I would ask no better."

"Then," said my companion, "let us enter and see how it is inside."

We entered and the arrangement and furnishing were even more perfectly to my liking than the outside. I stood afraid lest I should intrude upon the inmates; but my friend said, "Make yourself at home. This house and grounds are at your disposal as long as you choose to make it your home. Only be careful that it is not defaced or injured by any disorderly conduct on the part of visitors."

I assured him that no one but orderly people would be admitted, and no conduct allowed that would injure in any way the beautiful walls or furniture.

"You will notice," he said, "that there are many mirrors; and these have the quality of retaining any pictures thrown upon them, which can afterwards be reproduced by one skilled in the art. There are also registers, called sounding boards, that retain and reproduce any sounds that fall upon them. You now have the opportunity of choosing the life that is most agreeable, and calling to you the friends whose society you most enjoy."

"That is certainly all anybody could ask," I remarked. "To whom am I indebted for all this,—the home and the opportunity to enjoy myself so abundantly?"

"To the One Source of all good," was replied, "The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave us in His life on earth an example of true heavenly life, and said, 'If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and follow me.' But there is no compulsion in His service. As I said before, you are free to choose your friends and live the life you most enjoy. There are compen-

sations attending every deliberate choice you make, but no arbitrary punishment nor reward."

I was now left alone and went through my house and garden, more and more delighted with everything I saw. What a lovely place it is, to be sure; and given without my asking! Lonesome, though, if no one is to live with me! I wonder what the man meant about my choosing my friends and living my own life?

I lay down on a couch and fell asleep; and in my sleep dreamed I saw my family about my coffin and my body enclosed for burial. I tried to speak and tell them I am alive and much better off than ever before in my life; but I could not make them understand and in my effort returned to consciousness.

I was greatly disturbed by this vision, and recalling what had occurred since I awakened in this world, I began to reflect on my life in the world and thought what a failure I had made of it, but said to myself, "That is all past and I am here alone to begin over again,—so my mother said; but I cannot do as she wanted me to do. I have no love for that kind of life. I will go out and see what I can find in the city."

MEETS A FORMER ACQUAINTANCE AND TESTS THE EFFECTS OF PURE WATER.

I had not yet felt the need of employment or of money to pay my way and not much about the kindness that had provided clothing and so good a home. Sauntering along the street I met a man I had known years before. He greeted me cordially and asked me when I came and how I liked the looks of things.

I said, "This is the first I have been out alone. My mother met me, and later a man showed me a very nice place he said is to be my home; but I got rather tired staying alone and thought I would look about me and find what there is to enjoy. It seems quite a city and so there must be places of business and amusements of various kinds."

"Yes," was the answer, "one can find almost anything he looks for; some dangerous places, too, as there were in the world you left. Did you have something special in mind that you wished to see? Suppose we take a look at the public library and the parks provided for recreation. These are protected places in which a stranger cannot be molested."

I followed, first into the library, and looked at the rows of books, some of which had familiar titles; then into a park, where were fountains and public baths, and my friend suggested that we try a bath, as, he said, "the day is fine and the baths are refreshing after one has made such a change as you have."

To this I consented reluctantly, saying I preferred to bathe at home and was afraid of being chilled.

Being assured there was no danger of this, I disrobed, and touching the water with my hands, received a shock that made me draw back and exclaim with an oath, "Why didn't he tell me these baths were charged and then I would never have tried it, or would have known what to expect?"

My guide, hearing my exclamation, called from an adjoining room that he was sorry I did not find the water agreeable; that the effect was not the same to all; that healthy people found it most agreeable and invigorating; that if I would persevere and try again, I might overcome the first impression.

JOINS A PLEASURE EXCURSION.

But I said, "No, I will wait till I get home, or find another kind of water."

"You may find that in another part of the city, but it is not so pure as this, nor so likely to conduce to health of body and vigor of mind."

"That may be," I said, "and yet better suited to my condition."

"Very likely," was the rejoinder. This was said sorrowfully; and afterwards he added, "But I wish you would try this again, and not try to find the other. If one can learn to like it, there are no such dangers here as in the lower places; indeed it is very much safer and better in everyway."*

"Every one to his liking," I said, and hastening to put on my clothes, I went alone into the park again, and seeing a crowd of men and women not far away, I approached near enough to hear what was said by one who appeared to be spokesman of the company.

"Let us arrange," said he, "for a pleasure excursion, where we can have music and dancing and a general good time. There is a boat ready to carry us where we decide to go, and good bathing and boating facilities." Seeing me within call, he beckoned me to come nearer and said, "I see a stranger who will perhaps join us, and then our party will be complete."

I did not quite like the free manners of some of them;

*Pure water, or the "water of life" in the Word, is spiritual truth, and is that which judges (John 13, 48); therefore bathing or drinking spiritual waters, or waters on the spiritual plane of life is a test of character, that is, the affection for the truth of the Word.

This was begun; but the wind increased, and it became so cold we were all glad to huddle in the little cabin and turn toward a small island not far distant. We were driven back and forth in our efforts to reach this, but at last were able to fasten our boat to a tree and wait till the storm should be over.

While waiting, one of the company proposed that we should narrate our experiences since coming to this "new country," he called it, saying it was absurd to believe we were not on the same earth where we had always lived; though when he first came, a stranger told him he had left the natural world and was now a spirit in the spiritual world.

I said, "how do you account for seeing people here that we know died many years ago, if we are not in the spiritual world?"

At this they looked at one another knowingly, and another answered, "That is either a dream or a hallucination. People often resemble, and it is easy to take one for another. I have known of many such cases."

So we all had, and I was silenced, if not convinced. The storm having somewhat abated, on examining our boat, we found it leaking and so badly injured by the beating of the waves as to need repairs before being seaworthy. We decided to go on shore, try to build a fire and prepare a place of shelter until we could proceed on our tour of exploration.

WAS CAPTURED AND MADE PRISONER.

This, however, was never accomplished; for while we waited to prepare our boat, a band of outlaws came upon us and we were captured and made to do the menial work

on their ship, and carried to a place barren and desolate, where we were deprived both of our liberty and the common comforts of life. Often we seemed ready to perish from cold and hunger, and knew not which way to go to escape from our cruel captors, who seemed to delight in seeing us suffer. There were both men and women in our party—about twelve in all. The men were made to gather materials and build forts and houses that our captors might sally forth for more prisoners, and for booty with which to enrich themselves. The women were given lighter work; but all were treated harshly and made to feel their degradation and bondage. We had little time to bemoan our fate, for the task-masters were very exacting, and we were terrified by their threats of dreadful punishment, if we showed any signs of rebellion. This continued for what seemed a long time, when we were again taken on board ships and carried to a place of still greater desolation, and cast into prison, dark and dismal, where it seemed we were beyond the reach of hope or rescue.

In this place I remained in a state of abject fear and horror, bemoaning my fate and cursing my Maker, until I fell into a kind of stupor, having given up hope; when suddenly a light shined in my dark cell, and a voice roused me as from sleep, and said, "The Lord will not cast off forever; though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion. If any turn from his evil way and call upon the Lord, He bringeth the prisoners out of their prison and breaks their bands asunder."

*"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." (Heb. 9-27.)

The reader should keep in mind that this man, together with all in the Intermediate world, is passing through his judgment, and is being led in freedom by the Divine Providence, to see and forsake his evil ways.

I started up and said, "That sounds like the voice of my father, reading, when I was a child. He believed the Bible; and after all there may be more in prayer than I supposed."

HE CRIED UNTO THE LORD IN HIS TROUBLE, AND WAS SAVED
OUT OF HIS DISTRESSES (PS. 107).

I fell on my knees and said, "If there is a God who pities the miserable, oh, send some friend to release me from this dreadful place!"

The words were scarcely spoken when the whole structure seemed to have vanished, and I was again in a city and standing outside the gate of the beautiful home that had been offered to me soon after my mother left me. I fell on my knees again in joy and wonder at such a speedy deliverance in answer to my cry of despair; and going into my house, I threw myself upon a couch and gave myself to reflection until I fell asleep; and in my dreams again heard my mother say, "The Lord Jesus Christ is ever present to help and to save those who want his help."

When again awake I resolved to stay about my own home and to avoid the company of strangers, at least of any that would lead me away from the city where my home was. For a time I turned my attention to reading.

There were books in my home on various subjects, some in the form of stories, others descriptions of different forms of government, of people, their habits and customs; also histories of ancient times and parables teaching moral lessons, etc. Tiring of being alone, I walked about the grounds, sat under the trees and finally went out into the street without any definite purpose except that of wanting a change. Soon I met a man coming to see me,

who said, "I was just looking for someone to join me in a game. Being a stranger and having nothing special to do, I would like a social game while I wait for something to turn up; for time begins to hang rather heavy on one's hands when not employed, and there is no excitement."

I replied that I was just thinking the same thing.

"This seems rather a queer world," he continued, "where all the necessaries are provided and no special motive for work of any kind. I see some people who seem to be quite busy, though to what purpose I do not know. For my own part, I am not inclined to hard work unless there is a necessity for it," the man said.

"You have expressed my sentiments exactly," I replied, "though I think people are happier who have something to do. Lets look around and inquire if there is not some kind of work that would at least break the monotony and bring us some sort of returns."

* * . * * * *

Question—Do you eat food as in this world?

While in the prison, I seemed to live a purely corporeal life; to eat and drink and sleep as I had done in the former world; to feel cold and weariness; but when freed from that, I had not thought much about wanting to eat or drink; I was still in rather a passive—half awake state. The food I ate in prison and while at work seemed cold and poor; but still I had to have something and so took what I could get. The clothing, also, was coarse and scanty. There are houses for refreshments and tables where people gather and find refreshment. There are trees and plants and all things to delight the eye; sounds to exhilarate and cheer through the ear, and an appetite and desire for knowledges through these. This is the food of spiritual beings.

gasped. Then ugly pictures began to spread themselves about; and what had been beautiful and clean walls became galleries of horrors, representing scenes that had been narrated. I seemed in a different place and in new surroundings. I was alarmed and horrified and sat down to reflect on all that had occurred. Had I not followed instructions? True I had not called anybody in particular; indeed, had not really called at all; had only wished for people who were interesting and had nothing special to do. It was true we had been free to indulge in all sorts of mirth and somewhat intemperate in our indulgences, but hadn't really meant any harm; and here are these noises and ugly pictures about me, and I'm afraid to go out for fear I get into some other trouble.

When I could bear it no longer, I opened the door and looked out, but everything seemed changed. I tried to think what to do, but grew more and more perplexed. At last, overcome by weariness, I fell into a troubled sleep and in my sleep dreamed I saw my mother again, in a bright place, and with her other friends, who looked sorrowfully at me and said, "When will he learn to be wise?" "Why does he make such foolish choices?"

When I woke, I resolved to try to find work to do and quit hunting for pleasure and amusement. So I got up, and looking out saw the notice, "Men wanted for many kinds of work." Following directions, I was again in what looked like an office, but in a smaller building, and under care of not so good looking a manager. However, I was kindly received and asked if I wanted employment and for what purpose. I answered, I had no definite purpose; I was tired of amusement and of doing nothing; I would like to be of some use.

He said he was glad to hear me say that and would be glad to assist me to find a use that would be suited to my ability and tastes.

RESOLVES TO BUILD HIMSELF A NEW HOME.

I replied that I had not been used to hard work in my later years, but that I felt well and strong now; and since my house had changed so that it was not agreeable to stay in, I would like to plan and build one more in the heart of the city, so that I would not be so much alone or dependent on visitors for company. He gave me a curious look, and said, that sounded as though I rather wanted to make myself comfortable than be useful to others; and if my house had become unpleasant, it was because I had not made the right use of it. However, if I still had my own pleasures in view as the first consideration, I would not be hindered in carrying out my wishes; that not far away there was ground and material for building, and I could choose both and get what help I desired to erect any structure that I would plan.

I felt greatly elated at this offer and started in the direction I was told to go, and soon found abundance of material of various kinds, seemingly prepared to order. I looked about to find the owner and was told that anyone was welcome to use anything he found here, and to select any place that suited his fancy. I was not long in choosing a lot well located, with trees and shrubs growing about the border of it, and set to work to plan a house that would be suitable for the location.

I worked for a long time with pencil and paper, trying to get a suitable design; and at last settled upon a plan that I thought would answer the purpose. There, too, I

HE TRIES AMUSEMENTS IN HIS HOME.

"Thank you," I said, "I will go home and try that."

I hastened away filled with the new idea of obtaining companionship. When I reached my home, there seemed to have been some change from when I first entered it, as though preparation had been made for company. I wondered a little at this, as I had seen no one about, and then sat down to think as to whom I would call. At first I thought of my mother, but reflected that she must be a long ways off, and I had better ask for some one nearer. Then, too, she had disappeared when I refused to go with her and live a strict life without amusement. No, I wanted recreation and diversion; for life would be very dull unless I could find lively people who relished games and fun. When I had enough of this, I would think about work.

This being decided upon, I looked out and saw a party of several persons approach and stop before my house. They were lively, pleasant-looking people; and as I went out to inquire if I could be of service, a fine looking man with something familiar in his face, said, "We were out for a stroll and were strongly attracted to this part of the city; and when we came to this house, seemed to feel, or rather felt that we were wanted here, and stopped to inquire if such was the case."

I answered, "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, but was feeling the want of companionship that would join in some games, or other means of diversion; for I was rather tired of reading and also of staying alone, though my home is as pleasant as I could ask. Will you not come in? You may prove to be just the people I want."

They answered, "We felt there was some attraction,

and will be glad to accept your invitation and become further acquainted."

We entered into conversation in regard to the amusements the city afforded; also the libraries and other public buildings, which brought to mind my experience with the baths; and I asked if the water in all the bathing places in the city was so highly charged as the one I had visited. They said they thought not, but were not very well informed on that subject. Having had similar experiences to mine, they had not been attracted to the water, except in boats. They had made short excursions. I did not care to give my story to strangers, so said, "I prefer to seek diversions on the land and near my own home."

Various topics were discussed and games proposed. The company seemed very congenial and just what I had been longing for. It is not necessary to detail the steps by which we ascended, or rather gradually *descended*. They did not remain long the first time, but being urged, promised to come soon again. At the first there were three, who came in, and I made the fourth. Soon they brought another four, seven, coming; so we had two tables, or played double games; and my house became a place of rendezvous for quite a circle of men and women. All at first seemed orderly and respectable and not inclined to excess. But people who have no employment will not remain satisfied to go on long without a change. Our gatherings became more boisterous, and story-telling was one means of diversion. These grew to verge on the improbable and unclean. One day when I was alone in the house after the company had just gone, I seemed to hear whisperings about me and the stories told were repeated from the walls. I became alarmed. "What can this mean?" 1

gasped. Then ugly pictures began to spread themselves about; and what had been beautiful and clean walls became galleries of horrors, representing scenes that had been narrated. I seemed in a different place and in new surroundings. I was alarmed and horrified and sat down to reflect on all that had occurred. Had I not followed instructions? True I had not called anybody in particular; indeed, had not really called at all; had only wished for people who were interesting and had nothing special to do. It was true we had been free to indulge in all sorts of mirth and somewhat intemperate in our indulgences, but hadn't really meant any harm; and here are these noises and ugly pictures about me, and I'm afraid to go out for fear I get into some other trouble.

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found material ready, and was soon, as I thought, in a fair way to build just what I wanted. I found also people willing to help in consideration of my offering to do as much for them when wanted.

Still I could not get things just right. The foundation shifted and crumbled when I came to lay the timbers on it. My design lacked in detail and I did not put the pieces together so they would stay. At first I blamed my helpers, but they referred to my plan, so that after many efforts and failures I sat down in despair to consider how and why it was that I could not succeed in this, my first real undertaking, and whether I had better give it up and go back to the house that had been given me. I shuddered at the thought of the noises and the pictures there, and concluded I would try to put up a smaller place that would do for a shelter from the cold; for the season of winter seemed to show signs of approach. The trees looked bare and cold winds blew. My clothing, too, became worn and ragged, and I felt the need of shelter and warmth. My old comrades did not seek my society and I felt forlorn and forsaken. When I thought of company, I felt rather like hiding, because homeless and having nothing but rags to wear.

REJECTS THE OFFER OF INSTRUCTION AND FAILS IN ALL HE
UNDERTAKES.

Things went from bad to worse until I was impelled to try to find some help, but did not know to whom to go. At last, seeing a man approach, I asked if he could direct me where I could find work of some kind that would give me shelter and food. The man proved to be an angel of mercy to me. He took me to a place he said would be my home, if I wished to learn to live according to the laws

of order, which required that every one should be of use to others and have an employment that would benefit the people among whom he lived. He gave me food and better clothes, after he had showed me water in which to bathe. I felt my need of this now, and the water refreshed and invigorated me all through, so that I felt soothed and encouraged as I had not for a long time.

The man then asked me what use I would like to perform, and said there were schools of instruction, if any one was not prepared to enter upon the life or use he preferred, and that I would be received upon application to the proper person.

I replied that I didn't expect to have to go to school like a child again; that I was a man and knew how to do many kinds of work—teach a school, conduct an insurance business, or manage a farm; that I had been a lawyer and in the real estate business, where I succeeded very well until I lost my health.

"You are in a new world now," was the answer, "and new conditions require new aims and purposes, as well as new employment; and if one has not had right ones, he must begin as a little child and learn everything anew. Those who were willing to do this would be helped in every way possible."

I had had many severe lessons and did not resent this advice, but asked if he would not give me a trial and see what I could do.

"Yes," he said, "if you are not yet cured of self-conceit. Go into that forest; select material with which to build a shelter for the sheep you see in yonder field and then call them into it."

"That is easy enough," I said, piqued that he did not ask something harder. I went into the woods, where seemed to be everything one could want. After wandering about for some time, I began to look for material suitable to build the shelter for the sheep. I selected some small trees that I thought would do for posts and planned to cover these with the branches and leaves; but I had forgotten to bring anything with which to cut the trees, and so returned to the house, where I found implements of many kinds. Selecting an axe and a saw, I went again to the woods and was making some headway with the work, when I heard strange noises not far distant; and looking through the trees, saw men and women dancing, while nearer to me was a musician playing on a violin. I stopped work and going nearer saw some of the people with whom I went on the boat. They accosted me and asked how I had gotten away from the robbers whom they saw take me and some others; and before I had time to answer asked "What are you doing now? Will you not join our party again and go sight-seeing, as we are doing? We were passing along the road, and seeing the pleasant wood, stopped to rest, and enjoy ourselves with a dance."

I thanked them and said I had been given some work to do and afterward would be glad of a visit with them. At this they laughed and said they were not looking for work, which they thought dull business. Remembering former experiences, I thought best to go back to my work, but had lost some of my interest in it, and soon became tired of the cutting and went to gathering branches that had fallen and boughs to make the cover. I was in the edge of the wood and had not far to take them; and when I began putting them together, found my parts of unequal

length, and the branches I had picked up would not bear any weight; so I had to throw them aside and go back for others.

I did the same thing in a different way until I was exhausted and discouraged, yet not humble enough to go to my employer and confess my failure. I lay down among the boughs and fell asleep. In my dreams I heard wild beasts who were catching and killing the sheep that I was to have sheltered. I woke in a state of horror and distress, and getting up, thought I would try to protect the sheep by frightening away the wolves; but looking around could see neither and began to consider what I had better do next. I was ashamed to meet my employer and tried to hide when I saw him coming, but he paid no attention to my failure, and called me to mow some grass to feed the sheep. I said, "They have all been destroyed by wild beasts;" but he pointed to a barn where they seemed quite secure. I felt greatly relieved and asked for a sickle to cut the grass. When one was given me, I seemed to have forgotten altogether how to use it and made such poor work that the man said, "You destroy more than you save. You need to learn the use of tools before you try to engage in that kind of work." I tried different things, but in all failed, and wandered about like a beggar.

At last I met a man who accosted me and said, "Friend, you seem to be in want. Can you not think of some one you knew in the other life that you would like to see? Some one who could give you advice and help, if you are not able to find it yourself?"

"Hungry and thirsty, his soul fainted within him then again," he cried unto the Lord in his trouble and He delivered him out of his distress (Ps. 107-5, 6).

Then I thought of Brother T, and though I was ashamed of my miserable appearance, I said, "I had a neighbor—a good, kind man; if he is in this world, I would like to find him."

"Then think earnestly of him and pray to the Lord for help."

I thought of my former experience in prayer and fell on my knees, crying, "Lord, send me help!" and in a few minutes saw a man I recognized, but now young and strong, his face beaming with kindness, and sympathy. That was the beginning of my deliverance.

I was overcome with joy at seeing this friend and clasped my arms about his knees as I still knelt. He too, was much moved—too much to speak for a time; and raising me in his arms, we wept together. He seemed to understand without words, and we walked silently in the way of his choosing until we came to a large building surrounded by beautiful grounds. There we entered; and going to the entrance hall, he called for the superintendent, who, after a moment, seeing my needs, beckoned us to follow. When in a private room, my friend said, "This man I knew and loved in the natural world. He needs rest and comfort and sympathy, all of which I know he will find in this house."

I begged him to stay with me, and he did until I was well settled in my new home, where at first I was given a private room, water to bathe and new and comfortable clothing. Here I lay in a semi-conscious state, while my friend watched beside me. After a few days, he said he must return to his work, but would soon come again, and hoped to find me refreshed and ready to begin life anew. When he did come again, I could walk about with him,

and we conversed in a general way about the things we saw and the arrangement of the house, where provision is made to suit the necessities of all who need rest and refreshment, preparatory to entering places of instruction. I felt helpless and dependent as a little child, and ready to do whatever was suggested or advised by my friend or those with whom he had left me.

After a while I began to go daily to hear a lecture that was given in a hall or chapel of the building. My interest in the topics discussed led me to ask for books and so began a course of instruction that has opened a new life for me.

I later removed from this place to a regular school for instruction, at my own request; for I had come to see that I knew nothing as I ought to know, and to be willing to be taught, even as a little child, the first principles of right living.

I have wanted to speak to you further to tell you that though my progress was slow, I have never turned back and wanted to have my own way again. I have not sought pleasure, but duty, and pleasures pure and plentiful have come to me. I am still learning, but working also, trying to guard and protect others from the terrible mistakes of my own life. With some I am successful; but others have to learn as I did—by experience. I have been to visit Brother T. a few times, but the plane of thought in his society is too high for me to stay long; but still I am so glad there can be communication between us. I am studying hard now, that I may have a home and be with my wife when she comes.

O, the goodness of the Lord that we are given the opportunity to retrieve the past and to be made new creatures when we destroyed ourselves. My home is near a place of instruction, and I have much liberty in coming or going as there is need, or I may desire.

I will not ask for your time again soon, but know you will rejoice that I have come into a state and place of peace and harmony with the laws of Divine order, though not by any means into the perfect manhood to which I aspire, and which I see much of among my teachers and their friends.

God is with you. Fear not! Adieu!

*The above was given in short conversations during a period of nearly seven months, beginning on August, 1906, and ending March 6, 1907.

And HE spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance.

Gospel by Luke 15, 3 to 8 in N. V.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

J. G. WHITTIER.

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Voices from the Open Door

VOLUME ONE

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NUMBER THREE

CHAPTER V

A Son's Message to His Sorrowing Mother

NOW SENT

"To comfort all who mourn." Isa. 61:2.

EXPLANATION

May 28-29, 1912.

This testimony from the spiritual world is given by one who has had conscious life on this plane for more than three years, as you on the earth plane count time. I had not for more than one year of this period had conscious communication with any person still living in that world from which I had been raised by the resurrection of my spiritual body from the material one in which it had been formed and developed until I had reached the state of life which enabled me to use "

faculties of mind, and powers of body, in freedom according to intelligent conviction.

As I had passed the stage of boyhood and early manhood, had been instructed in the rules of right living, and trained in the habits of order and industry that fitted me to enter into, and successfully pursue the business methods then in use about me, I was for a time quite absorbed in efforts to gain what the world offered.

While still a young man, my physical health began to fail. A long illness was followed by a general decline, which it would not be useful to recall, but for the resulting change of attitude wrought in me toward the claims of another part of my being that had until then been little recognized.

As I came to see the transient nature of all earthly things, and turned my thoughts within and above, I became conscious of a Presence and Power that inspired hope and courage to bear the ills of that life, and reach toward one more enduring and satisfying than is possible to man on earth.

Thus after severe mental struggles, there was born within me a peace to which I had hitherto been a stranger. After some patient waiting, I passed into a peaceful sleep, during which the plane of my conscious life was changed, and the impediments to normal growth and activity removed, so that I was as a caged bird set free.

After I had passed through several states of life in the inner world, and had found a place and use suited to my capacity and attainments, I was sought for and informed that my mother, who is still in the natural world, had been in a very disturbed and distressed state of

mind since my release, from the thought that my departure might have been delayed, and my sufferings relieved by a different environment and skill than that which had been provided during the last period of my life on earth; and I was also told that through the agency of one known to her, whose conscious life is partially open on the inner plane, I could send information and answer the questions that caused my mother anxiety and sorrow.

This opportunity I gladly accepted, and sought to assure and comfort my mother by giving a relation of my experiences after entering this plane of life, and also my present view of the connection and relation between these and what had been trying and afflictive, as a means used by the Divine Providence to loosen the hold of what would have hindered my preparation for a free, happy and useful life in the spiritual world, for which the life in the natural world is only to be valued.

Any part of the information thus given I am happy to place at the disposal of the person who received it, to be used for the benefit of any who may be encouraged and comforted by the assurances there given, that the Lord is good to all, and though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion, and turn mourning into gladness and rejoicing.

MARCH 17, 1910.

"I am very happy to have the opportunity of sending a message to my dear mother through her friend.

"I am surprised and grieved that my removal from that plane of life should have occasioned her so much sorrow, for when I was raised into this, I found that what had been revealed in a religious system which she accepted is strictly true; and I gave myself to earnest study and to diligently obeying the laws of heavenly life as there revealed.

"This did not come to me at once after my introduction into the new life. I was most kindly received and all my wants supplied. To go into the details would require more writing than I will at present ask of you, but wish to say that my surprise was only equaled by my delight on being told that I had passed the gateway called below 'death,' but here 'birth;' and that I would now be free from the limitations that hindered the realization of the perfect manhood to which I aspired.

"To my mother, I desire to say, until the present my conscious life has been confined to the spiritual plane. Not that I did not remember and love those left behind, especially you, my dear mother, but the constant reminders that this is the real world, and the one I had left the world of effects, of shadows, and the thought that you knew this and were coming to me, and that by using my opportunities here I could be more useful to you when you come, reconciled me to the separation, which I now see is only a seeming, for those who love each other are never far apart.

Question: When can you make your presence known to me?

"Indeed I do not know. The planes upon which we live are separate degrees of life or rather of consciousness. Although as to your spirit you receive life from this plane and live in it, there must be the opening of an inner consciousness to make you sensible of the presence and companionship of those whose conscious life is altogether on this plane. As I said before, I have until now had no conscious communication with the world below, nor any desire for this, only that you might know of my enlarged and happy life. It is only on the spiritual plane that we can meet.

"You, too, are a spiritual being, though for the time encompassed by a body that has senses open on the natural plane, and brings you into touch with the life of that plane; you, too, have inner senses that connect you with us on the interior plane, or real life.

"The light by which we see is the Divine Truth. The warmth we feel is the Divine Love. These are to us the essentials of life. It is not an easy thing for one encompassed with the sphere of the natural world, and with the claims of the business of that world, and the demands of bodily wants, to be so liberated as to come into a realization of his relation to the spiritual life within and about him.

"In most cases this would not be orderly and safe, but with you, my dear mother, the veil is thin that hides these things from your conscious life. Still, only the Lord can remove it, and He will if the time comes during your stay in that world, when it would be useful to you and to those on this side who love you. Therefore, we will leave this with Him who orders all ^{all} for the best."

MARCH 20, 1910.

Question—Tell your experiences from the time you awoke in the spiritual world and on to the present time.

“To My Dear Mother:—It would require more writing on the part of your friend than I am willing to ask, to give a detailed account of my experiences, but I will attempt an outline that will contain the history of every event that had an influence on the end to be attained, the finding of my place and work in the Lord’s Kingdom.

“I awoke in a room homelike and pleasant in what seemed the early morning. I lay for a time with eyes closed and a sense of peace and rest to which I had long been a stranger, thinking that life was given for higher purposes than the struggle for material gain, and longing to realize the purpose of my Creator in endowing me with faculties that I felt had met with slight recognition on my part, during the greater portion of my life. While thus reflecting, I became conscious of a presence soothing and uplifting, and the removal of something from my eyes, upon which I looked up to meet the eyes of one I did not remember to have seen, but whose expression of kindness and gentle dignity gave confidence and pleasure. He greeted me with words of welcome into new conditions, where I would have every opportunity to realize all to which I aspired, and added, ‘All helps will be provided and no hindrances placed in the way of your development into the perfect manhood for which you were created.’

“With a feeling of wonder and gladness I asked how, or by what change I had come into such desirable conditions, and was answered, ‘By the change of your con-

scious plane of life from that of the natural to the spiritual, where you will find other laws in operation than those by which you have been environed in the past.

“‘Now if you will arise and make use of what has been provided,’ pointing to clothing and water for a bath, ‘I will be happy to accompany and introduce you further to the new world and new life upon which you have entered.’ He then retired, and I was delighted that I could, without effort, rise, bathe and dress as directed. I found the bath invigorating and refreshing; and my guide expressed pleasure when told of this, and said, ‘All do not find it so.’

“We had gone a short distance along a pleasantly shaded street when we were met by a man I recognized as my father, who very tenderly embraced me and said he had come to meet and welcome me to the land of peace and joy; and that he would conduct me to a house where were assembled many of my kindred and friends. I will not attempt to describe the joy of that meeting with grandparents, relatives and friends, who all rejoiced at my coming, and said it would not seem long until you, too, would come to share our freedom and joy. Questions were asked and answered on both sides, and I became more and more delighted with the new world and its order. The old had grown young and vigorous, and the immature had developed into more perfect manhood and womanhood. The house in which we met, I was told, was the home I had builded, or that was builded for me, while I had tried to be useful and faithful as a child and man in the natural world. It was my ideal of a pleasant home, and I was deeply gratef-

for it and the kindness I had received. I did not feel lonely when all had retired. I had been told that I had but to earnestly desire the presence of a companion and helper and it would be granted; but I wanted time to consider all that had come to me and to pray to the Lord and thank Him, as the giver of all good. When I had done this, my room was filled with light and my heart with a peace indescribable and I fell on my face in adoration and worship.

"How long I remained in this attitude I do not know, for I was aroused as from a sweet sleep and felt that a new day had begun. I arose and going to the door was greeted by the man who had first welcomed me, who asked if I felt refreshed and would like to see more of the new world where I had come to live. I said, 'Yes, indeed, I want to learn and to become useful as soon as possible.' We soon entered a grove and being seated, a long conversation followed, in which was explained the difference between this and the former life, in that all necessities are provided by our Heavenly Father, and that we are invited to accept and enjoy these and devote our energies to the acquirement of knowledge and its applications to life in the way of promoting the general good. "But," I said, 'if every necessity is provided for all, what room and motive is there for activity, except the knowing for its own sake, and the gathering of knowledge without an object?' 'You will soon come to see,' was answered, 'that all true wisdom is acquired by applying knowledge to life, and that there is no limit to the opportunities for doing this. In the first place, you are environed by objects that

picture forth your inward state of life. The trees about us represent the perceptions in our minds and change with changing states. Every one coming into this world is provided by the Lord with such surroundings as tend to call forth the best that is in him. The highest angels are present to protect and awaken tender emotions, and prevent what would disturb and distract the waking thoughts, so that every incentive is provided each one to enter the life for which he was created.

“If one is not willing to do this, and enter upon a life of usefulness to others, he finds the conditions about him changed, and is made to feel the pressure of laws that act with unerring certainty, that what one purposes for selfish ends alone shall bring to him failure and disappointment, while what is done for the general good returns compensations rich and abundant. After repeated trials and disappointments those who are capable of amendment are taken to places of instruction and gradually introduced into the use for which each is fitted. To supply this need, many teachers are required; also guards, guides, watchers, messengers, etc. These, too, receive ministries from others of their own society, and of other societies contiguous to it, much as on earth, except that the uses served are spiritual instead of natural. He said I would be able to find the use for which I am best fitted by visiting communities, or social centers, and institutions of learning where activities of various kinds are in operation; that I need feel no constraint and be in no haste, but act freely and without compulsion of any kind.’

“Following this advice I spent some months, speak-

ing from your computation of time, going from place to place, in each of which I found a kind reception, and my home waiting for me. Before leaving the place I was staying, I would form a definite conception of what principle I wished to see worked out, or illustrated, and having finished my investigations light would appear and begin to move, which followed, led me to what I had desired to find.

“As you know, all things in the earth have their beginnings and their correspondents here, and every move for the betterment of conditions among men is first conceived and put into operation in the world of causes. That which most strongly appealed to me was the work that had for its object the protection and betterment of those coming here in boyhood and early manhood, confirmed in neither virtue nor vice. There are those in the intermediate world who would lead such astray, and being unguarded, they would easily fall into the snares laid by cunning and deceitful men; therefore great care is taken and attendants provided who seek to call forth every good desire implanted while in the earth life, for angels can only influence by what they find in man, not what is outside of him. This they attempt by acts of kindness, by instruction, by admonition and offers of help, still leaving each one free to follow his own bent. When I came among those who had devoted themselves to this work and had remained long enough to learn their aims and methods, I did not wish to go farther, and entered upon a course of instruction that would fit me for useful service in this line of work. I find de-
in the associations and work this choice has brought

to me. I had much to learn and to unlearn and found helps at hand as I was ready to use them. Among the best of these are the books corresponding to those you have in the Church of the New Jerusalem. The only regret I have had since coming here is that I did not make myself better acquainted with these in the natural world.

"It is not necessary for me to speak further of life here, or on this plane, as it is so fully described in these books and in the Word when its internal meaning is understood. I greatly rejoice that you have these means of knowing and of coming into touch, or rather into association with the life in heaven, which is also the aim and effort of us in the intermediate world who aspire to become worthy children of an all-wise and loving Father.

"Do not for a moment think, dear mother, that the ties of affection and gratitude that bound me to you on earth are not as tender and strong as when I was with you and shared your joys and your cares, though, as I said, I had no desire to return, and made no effort to communicate with anyone on that plane; yet in all my associations and efforts to be useful, to learn and do our heavenly Father's will, and find my place in His kingdom, the thought of you, the looking forward to your coming, has been a part of my conscious life.

"As when one is making a home in a new country where his loved ones are to join him, the thought of them enters into everything he does, so it has been with me here, and will continue, for I do not love you less, but more, as life is enlarged, and my capacity for love

and joy has grown. I wish to say the same to him who was to me a kind and helpful father, and to my sisters, and their families. I am still an affectionate son, brother, uncle and friend. 'God be with you till we meet again.' "

APRIL 26, 1910.

"My Darling Mother:—I have just read your letter and grieve for your grief.*

"There is only one source of real, lasting comfort and that comes in a more interior way than would be my approach to you even from this plane of life, were it possible that you could see my form, and feel the pressure of my arms about you. I have been often with you of late, but into the confusion of the earth sphere, the peace of heaven cannot penetrate. One's consciousness must be withdrawn from the one to realize the presence of the other. You remember the Lord's words, 'Not as the world giveth give I unto you.' The abiding presence of the Comforter is in the inmost of us all, and to this must we turn to find lasting peace; this is what the angels teach me, and I have found it true.

"My brother R. was among those who welcomed me on the day of my resurrection, and we have often been together. His work is somewhat different from mine and yet in the same line. He is the same true-hearted man and brother. I will tell you more about him an-

*Letter addressed to the narrator and read with her.

other time. I have also seen Mr. F., but only for a short interview.

"All that you could wish for those you love is more than realized in the provision of the Lord's mercy and love.

"My duties call me. Good-bye."

MAY 23, 1910.

"I am very happy to speak to you again. Tell my mother to forget the past as far as possible, for out of its trials and sufferings have come to me great blessings. Through those experiences I was led to see that the earthly life with all it could offer was but transient and could not endure, and to turn my thoughts within and above, so that while I was still in the body of flesh, there was born within me a hope and peace not of that world. While this did not free me from outward suffering, it gave courage and rest to my spirit and prepared me to enter almost at once into the sphere of heaven, which is that of love and peace and a desire to be useful wherever the Father of us all may direct.

"This is very different from the sphere of worldly ambition and desire for gain, the controlling motives in so much of business activity. It is very much better to be freed from that before coming here. I have realized this many times in my association with others who came without such preparation, and have seen the difficulty with which they are freed from the entanglements by which they were bound both as to thought

and affection. This state draws about them others of like affection and they are borne along as by a swift current and encounter many seeming perils. I call them seeming, because the omniscient eye of Love foresees and prevents real danger and injury, and brings good out of all seeming evil and hardship, but cannot prevent suffering, because no one can be separated from what he loves and clings to, without seeing and feeling the evil that is bound up in every desire and longing that is not in harmony with Divine order; that is, the law of loving God with all the heart and others as himself."

(Narrator)—In answer to my thought this was added:

"Think you that the merciful Saviour would permit the agony you have suffered and that has pierced your heart when witnessing that of those dear to you, and the groans and cries that never cease, if there was any other way by which mankind could be liberated from its thralldom to the sense life—call it self-life?

"It would be impossible that suffering should be, if out of it were not to come a compensating joy. To deny this, to admit a doubt of it, is to deny the existence and rule of the Lord God.

"Can you not see this must be so?

"God, our Creator and Saviour, desires the happiness of all His creatures and provides every means to secure this, but real happiness can only exist as the effect of inward peace, security and heartfelt acquiescence in everything of the Divine order and government.

"Since God is everywhere present, needless suffering is impossible. Since he foresees and controls all things, a compensating good must be provided and assured.

"In my own case I am full of wonder and gratitude at the merciful way I was led and protected from the enemies to my spiritual life. Everything was made as easy for me as possible considering the work to be accomplished. Little by little were the bonds that held me to the self-life loosened, until the things upon which my thought and affections had rested, became as nothing and the reality of spiritual life came into view. My trust in the Saviour and consciousness of His presence and help opened a door of hope and peace.

"Please tell this to my dear mother, and tell her that out of all my long sickness and suffering was born in me a new life and hope that could not have come in any other way; that I now see this very clearly, and cannot be thankful enough for the mercy and kindnesses that provided all that could mitigate the suffering and prepare me for a happy entrance into new conditions where even the memories of past sorrows cast no shadows of regret or foreboding.

"Tell my mother to be comforted on my account, and to rejoice for me and with me, and look forward in hope and joy to the home where together we may realize the fulfillment of hopes and desires too high and far-reaching for the transient and limited existence on that plane which is only intended for the birthplace and nourishment of faculties that find their expansion and intended use when the prison bars of the earthly environments are left behind."

JUNE 1, 1910.

"Please say to my mother that what I have said is the merest outline of all I would like to tell her of my life here and its relation to what seemed trying and afflictive in my earth-life; how from my childhood circumstances that were regarded as trying and oppressive for one of my age, I now see to have been protective; how hereditary tendencies were kept in check, and I was trained into habits of order and method, by which I was prepared to be useful there, and are not less necessary to do effective work on this plane.

"To work for others and with others, is what everyone must at some time learn to do, if he would be in harmony with the life of heaven."

* * * * *

"I promised to say more about my brother R., who is still in the intermediate world.

"He, too, is employed in a place that can best be described by what is called 'settlement work,' in the large cities, where people of superior culture make for themselves a home that becomes a center of influence and a model for people, who, for want of development before coming here, are untrained for any useful employment. If left to wander about, they would be confirmed in habits of idleness and vicious tendencies. It is usually from feeling the need of shelter and nourishment that they consent to stay in one place and become interested in improving their surroundings. Such are gradually led by example and precept, and through kind-

ness shown them, into habits of industry and the love of knowing and understanding the laws by which different forces are operated, and step by step they are led into a life of true order. Brother R.'s special work is to superintend and direct the work of those engaged in planning and ornamenting the grounds about the buildings. He is quite skillful in devising ways to interest others and in presenting models for their imitation.

"It is difficult to describe how these things are done by spiritual beings in a world of spiritual substances, so you must think of the uses and not the form."

JULY 25, 1910.

"I wish to speak this morning, to my dear mother and express my most cordial and loving greeting and good wishes for her happiness and growth in all things that will bring her natural thought and affection into harmony with her highest perception of truth and good which is the life of heaven, where the good alone is sought for and regarded in all efforts to help men out of the delusions by which they are ensnared.

"I want to assure my mother that there is no cause for regret in connection with any part of my earthly life—least of all that part nearest the close. There was no conscious want or longing that was not fully met in the peaceful sleep and joyful awakening that followed. I am glad to assure you of my sympathy in all efforts to realize the oneness of life. The same energy that vivifies all in the spiritual plane, or world, is present, and the source of whatever becomes apparent and sensed on the natural. The same laws are operative here and there, for you, too, are a spirit and in the spiritual world where your thoughts are perceived and from inmost affection project an encompassing sphere. When engrossed with thoughts that belong alone to the natural plane you drop out of sight. Those not born of charity produce a discordant sphere and discourse therefrom has a discordant and grating sound.

"What reflects upon the wisdom and goodness displayed in the order and arrangement of things affecting the welfare of the human race in general, or in any particular, opens a yawning chasm that fills the beholder with fear and horror. If each is not led in the best

and only way, there is no leading whatever, nothing that can be depended upon. All is chaos, and one who really admits this, plunges headlong into an abyss. Therefore, at all times hold fast your confidence in the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of the Divine Love. The things that appear visually on this plane are just as real on that, but are not heeded because they are not usually ultimated materially; they are, however, not the less to be regarded. I speak this from the deepest love of which I am capable.

"I feel the deepest interest in your mutual helpfulness and the results of this companionship to both, for each has her mission and her work, the influence of which is not confined to the there and now.

"God bless you both; good-bye."

AUGUST 6, 1910.

(Narrator)—I had wondered a little if any message could come that would add to what was so assuring and comforting in the former communications. This seems to explain and complete the others, giving as it does, a conception of the process by which the happy termination was made possible—the uses of what we call adversity.

Mr. — sends this personal message to you: "Say to E——'s mother for me that I greatly rejoice that she accepts as genuine the messages that have, in the Lord's great mercy, been sent to her; and that I say this because it is very unusual that such methods are employed; and I now assure her that I have seen her son, and that it would be impossible for her to over-estimate his assurances of the happy outcome of his trying earthly experiences, both as to his freedom from all hindrances to his rapid advancement in preparation to enter his heavenly home, and also in the useful work he is doing while this preparation is being completed. She has certainly great occasion to rejoice in his behalf and with him."

AUGUST 21, 1910.

(Narrator)—While thinking of your desire for some further message from your dear one in the land unseen, yet so near, came the whisper:

"Tell my mother that when she reads what I have said in answer to her desire, that it comes as if just spoken from the heart that loves her, and desires her happiness; that since communication has been opened between us, I am conscious of a nearness and sympathy that were not before perceived. The realization of the law that thought brings presence depends upon the plane of life upon which one's thought is determined. The spiritual man is not attracted by a thought of him as corporeal, or of a corporeal environment, but of him as a recipient of the love and wisdom that create his environments, as we think of the qualities of the Lord's essence from which come all forms of use and beauty that fill the universe. How beautiful is the earth with its covering of green! Much more delightful, however, is the inner world of living forms created from the sun of heaven.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1910.

"I wish to say to my dear mother that I am now busily engaged in the work about which I told in the narrative of my experiences in finding that for which I am best fitted and in the pursuance of which I find great delight. My work is not so much to rescue those who from waywardness have gone far astray, as to prevent those who have not confirmed themselves in evil loves and evil habits, from falling into ways and associations by which they would be ensnared. Every influence is exerted to prevent any one from falling below the standard he has set for himself in his state of clearest perception.

"I have now a class of boys in training who had very little instruction in the principles of right living, but who had a sense of honor in regard to giving every one his due, and would not impose upon a weaker person or one ignorant of what they called the rules of trade, but were in other ways rough and sometimes cruel. Their sense of honor formed a basis for the implantation of a great variety of noble and lovable qualities; and as these are developed, the unlovely things drop away. It is the work of angels to seek for and call forth the good, however deeply hidden it may have been by evil associations and pernicious habits.

"I am not confined to this class of associates, but can have the companionship, not only of those engaged with me in the same kind of work, but of those engaged in other avocations.

"I also visit other centers of education, as the one where Mr. — and his co-laborers reside. There is no

limit placed upon my activities and travels, which all have some use as an end; and this adds to the interest and delight of all my undertakings.

"I am rejoiced at your improved cheerfulness of spirit and comfort in physical conditions. I know you wish to grow in all that will increase your usefulness in the furtherance of the Lord's reign on the earth. I am never far from you."

DECEMBER 18, 1910.

"To my dear mother, I would like to say, though having just read with you her letter of the 16th, my heart is almost too full for words.

"Oh, my mother, my dear little mother, if words of mine could only assure and comfort you, how gladly would I say them over and over again. Cannot you believe, cannot you trust in the all-embracing love that notes the sparrow's fall, and know from this that not the smallest thing affecting your son's comfort and well-being from the beginning of his life until now, but was foreseen and most mercifully provided so that nothing could have been better than it was? Such is the Divine Providence that no link in the chain of events that guides and guards and draws us to our home is wanting.

"It was much better for me in every way to have spent those last days of the earth life just where I did, and better for you also. I could not be altogether blind to your suffering. Indeed it was my sympathy for that which prompted the effort to which you so touchingly re-

Had we been together, outward conditions would have so engrossed our conscious life that neither could have received the strength and comfort from within that the Lord through His angels was seeking to impart, and which He mercifully provided that we should be in condition to receive. It is only by trust in His all-wise and loving providence that this can be seen from the earth side, and it is only by this that we who dwell on different planes can be united.

"Oh, if you could only turn your thought away and forget the dates and everything of the former life. Think of the Lord's mercy in bringing me safe through it all, of His great goodness in permitting me to send this message to assure you of my safety and well-being and of the truth of what you have hoped and believed in the times of your greatest enlightenment, by means of which you have been enabled to assure and comfort others.

"Oh, my dear mother! Hold fast to this assurance of the wisdom and goodness of our Creator and Saviour, of His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, and you will come to feel more and more that everything is right, always has been, always will be so, else there could be no heaven of happy angels singing 'Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'

"All happiness to intelligent moral beings is from the heartfelt acquiescence in everything of the Divine order and government. That there is much of the seeming on the earth side, the sense plane, to cloud the perception of the intent and purpose of much that occurs, to awaken doubt and anxiety, we on this plane are permitted to see, and also the reason why this is so; also

that behind and above it all is the over-brooding of the Divine Mercy, so that nothing, not the smallest iota that touches a human soul, but is tempered to meet some need, to bring some compensating good.

"To come into harmony with heaven, let your thought dwell on what will tend to confirm these truths in the understanding, and then the heart will rest. This thought will bring you into association with angelic spheres of thought and affection, and into conjunction with the Lord from whom comes that universal sphere of peace that embraces or encompasses all in the heavens.

"What more can I say to assure and comfort you? It is not by dwelling upon events in my earth life, especially those when physical infirmity prevented the free activity of the intellectual and spiritual faculties, that you can be made conscious of the presence of what you desire and yearn to realize, and to which you unwittingly close the door of entrance.

"It is only when faith in the Lord and love to the Lord open the door that communication with heaven becomes possible."

MAY 9, 1911.

"I would like to say this to my dear mother. That I have not continued to send messages as frequently as formerly is not that my interest in, and affection for you is in any way diminished, but because there seems less occasion since you have the record of my experiences and are informed as to my occupation and environment as well as it is possible for me to describe in the language and imagery with which you are familiar.

"Of course, there are changes, as with you, from day to day and even from hour to hour; new thoughts, feelings and associations bring a change of environment, a change of occupation, while the main trend and tenor of life remain the same.

"It would not be profitable for either you or me to keep the attention fixed upon the details that make the daily round of our activities, many of them only important as they are related to other events that would be tedious to narrate. On the whole my time and energies are employed much as when the message was sent to you in December. There is constant enlargement in life as one makes use of the opportunities offered for the acquirement of knowledges and for applying these to the improvement of ourselves and others; for we must grow here as on the earth plane, by knowledge applied to life. Thus do we become recipients of the Divine influx that is ever in the effort to mould us into the image and likeness of the Giver. I am glad to assure you that from the inner viewpoint there is no cause for anxiety, fear nor regret, but only for gladness and rejoicing that all things are in the hands of the infinite and unchanging Lover of mankind.

JULY 19, 1911.

"I am most happy to find you disengaged so that you can receive a short message for my mother.

"Tomorrow is her birthday. It would be ungrateful in me not to send a token of remembrance when it is possible for me to do this.

"She was always a most faithful and affectionate mother, a wise counsellor and generous in providing for my every want.

"That she was left in that world and I brought into the more interior plane was a provision of the Divine mercy that each might receive the training needed to develop faculties that fit us for the special use to which we are adapted.

"I am at present attending a conference or convention of persons engaged in the same line of work within a certain district.

"As you know, people here are related as to distance by their states of life, or, what is the same, the states of affection and thought, for it is this that decides and controls the life. This is more evident here than on that plane where many times the life seems to be controlled by other things than the person's own state and choice. Back of this appearance there is a law operating, the results of which will sooner or later appear.

"I have spoken of this because I wish to give an incident in confirmation and illustration of this general principle or law."

"The incident I have to tell you is this: I was one day engaged in showing a class of boys the advantages of forming a definite purpose and plan before engaging

in any enterprise, when one of them interrupted with the question, 'How do you harmonize that with the instruction to take no thought for the morrow, and not to think beforehand what one is to speak or answer when arraigned and brought before a court for trial in times of persecution?'

"I answered by asking, 'What was the character of the persons to whom these words were addressed? Were they not persons of the most decided purpose from which neither threats nor tortures served to turn them? And what was their purpose? To publish a certain message with which they had been entrusted. For the opportunity and power to do this, they must depend upon the providence of the Lord. The message was His message, the power His power; the wisdom and the opportunity He would provide at the right time and in the best way to accomplish the end intended.'

"So it is with our work. It is ours to form the definite purpose and follow it, not to choose the way in which we will be led, or the results. These are in the hands of the Lord."

JULY 25, 1911.

"Please tell my dear mother that I recall the visit of a year ago.

"The year has brought happy changes to her of which I am glad.

"To me it has shown wonderful displays of the Divine mercy and wisdom in rescuing the misguided and wandering and in granting me the privilege of sharing with others in the blessed work of being a message bearer of good tidings to discouraged people who kept looking behind and about them instead of upward to the Lord and heaven for help.

"I have been near my mother and felt she had some perception of my presence. How glad I am of this confirmation in her letter to you and of the assurance she expressed that the all of life is love, that we should be the recipients and reflectors of the Divine love which is unfathomable and ceaseless in its operation to find recipients that may be blessed and happy in sharing in its generous intent.

"As to the evangelist of whom you speak I have made inquiries. He is earnest and sincere or he could not affect people as he does. At the same time he is under the delusion that man is saved by immediate mercy, not knowing at all what is involved in regeneration and salvation; that this is effected by learning truths and living according to them.

"Still, when one's intentions are good, from the Divine Providence over-ruling, his mistakes are not suffered to do real injury. Few are prepared to receive real interior truth, and the teaching in the churches is adapted

to the states of those who attend and others are led each one as his state requires. A state of external order is desired and desirable and is preserved by the Lord as far as possible without infringing upon man's freedom. This for the sake of protecting innocence and to provide a basis upon which the heavens may rest and be conjoined to earth by correspondence. All religious organizations have their use, else they would not be permitted, and each has its counterpart in the world of spirits.

"Each individual is attracted or repelled by a corporate sphere, as it is in harmony or otherwise with that he has made about himself by his life of affection and thought.

"Yes, there is great need for watchfulness and prayer that we may escape the many snares laid for the unwary. As the Lord said: 'If a man abide not in me he is as a branch that is withered.'

"The state of the natural world appears from this side to be one of great commotion and unrest, requiring constant watchfulness on the part of the guardian spirits and angels to prevent disastrous outbreaks from the intensity of feeling stirred by any opposition to the dominating love of power and wealth that has such a strong hold of the masses who control business affairs.

"But I only wanted to add to what was said before. It is very comforting to be so affectionately remembered as all references to me in your letters indicate.

"The desire for affection and for the approval of those we love, is not lessened by one's removal to this plane of life, but rather intensified since we realize more fully that

the all of life is of love, love embodied, love expressed in forms of activity and use.

"To be able to live a true life, a life in harmony with the currents that bear us up and on towards the ideal life, is compensation for whatever of suffering or struggle that may have contributed to this end. E."

MARCH 12, 1912.

"Dear Little Mother, I am happy to have the opportunity of speaking to you through the pen of your friend and mine, for such I now regard her.

"I have known that your relation to the material world has not for some time been normal and healthy, but, at the same time, that your spiritual health has not suffered thereby, that this has been tenderly protected, and that what seemed grievous would be so overruled as to bring you a compensating good.

"As to my own progress and work, I am learning to care less and think less of environment and social attractions; that is, associating with congenial friends and people I meet; or even in exploring new fields for information; and to give myself almost entirely in seeking to meet the needs of the many who are constantly coming into the intermediate world without fixed principles and right conceptions of life; their higher nature dwarfed from having been starved and neglected.

"Still, I have not been unmindful of you, my "

mother, but have made you frequent visits and sought to soothe and comfort you by whispering of Him, the Life Giver, whose love and care are never for a moment withdrawn.

"I will hold myself ready to respond to any call, to any opportunity offered me to be in any way of service to you.

"Ever your loving son,

E."

JUNE 5, 1912.

"Please say to my mother that the last message I sent her in reference to my present attitude toward environment does not indicate that I am less sensitive as to what is beautiful and harmonious, or less affected by contact with spheres of people whose thought and aims are not in accord with heavenly order, but that I am so protected and guided in the work given me, and so ensphered with the ardor of the Divine Love that seeks the wayward and wandering, that for the time being, while engaged in this effort to rescue men from the perils their own evil loves invite, personal considerations are lost sight of.

"And so I trust it will be with you in giving to the world the knowledge of which so many stand greatly in need.

"Count it a privilege and joy that you have that which appeals to you as worth the giving, and trust in the Lord to open hearts to receive the same as His gracious gift of love."

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER VI

Now that the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.—Luke xx 37, 38.

There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.—I Cor. xv 44.

These texts are illustrated in the experiences of a former preacher and pastor who gives the following

EXPLANATION.*

I wish to explain to any one who may read the narration of my experiences in the intermediate world, that three years ago, there came over me a strong desire to speak to some one in the natural world; and in connection with this, the thought of a man I had known, though not intimately; and while I was wondering why I should wish to speak to

*From a man who had been for many years a popular preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was called into the natural world suddenly, in the midst of his work, when past life, eight years before the first conversation.

him more than others I had known better, I heard him calling and expressing the wish that I would tell him whether I had found things as I expected, after I left the body; and if what I had taught as a Methodist minister is true as seen in the light of the spiritual world.

Upon giving attention to this call and so drawing near, I saw a person, still in the natural world as to her conscious life, though in this spiritual world as to her thought and affection; and I was told by an angel who had been my instructor, that I might speak to her without injury to any one and answer the questions that had been asked me; which answers would be received by the man who called, as this person was known to him and he would believe her testimony.

This will explain why it is that the first passages are addressed to Mr. F. who was in doubt; while what follows is a connected narrative of experiences.

To a Person in doubt as to whether anything can be known in regard to the life to come:

Please say to Mr. F, I have been trying to speak to you, although I did not expect my thoughts to reach you. I wanted to assure you that I am still living and had been mistaken about many things. I myself could not think why I was so anxious to speak to you more than to many others, but now I see that it is of the Lord's providence, since there is an orderly way to converse with friends in the natural world.

I am delighted to be able to talk with you, my brother, and I appreciate the opportunity given me to rectify some of the mistakes I made when teaching in the ministry of the M. E. Church.

I was mistaken about the Bible teaching the resurrection of the natural body. We have spiritual bodies and do not need the natural body. I thought the Bible taught it. I was mistaken about the nature of the life immediately after death. I thought people stayed in an imperfect condition until the time of judgment and the general resurrection. I thought there was some kind of life, but not perceptible to any one but the person himself. I was much surprised when I found that my body was not to be raised. I wanted the angels to get some word to my family that I was not dead, but they said, "There is no way, except in some books that you rejected, and they would not believe them now that you had condemned them."

ORDERLY AND DISORDERLY COMMUNICATION.

I asked my instructor if communication is disorderly, and the answer was, "It is not disorderly, if the condition of the world were more in harmony with the conditions in this world of merciful judgment and wise arrangement." But almost all in that world are like statues of brass when seen from a spiritual standpoint. They believe only what they see or handle, and are eager to grasp all they can get of the world's goods, thinking that the principal joy of life is to be rich in those things. The time will come when men and angels can converse together as of old; but now there are but few who are prepared to receive messages in this way; and the mediums that are used by some are not mediums of good, but evil spirits, who take away the consciousness and reason by obsessing the medium's body with their wicked desires to gain control of material substance for their own amusement or gratification.

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MISTAKEN VIEWS.

I could tell you many things I was mistaken about. There is an intermediate world where all come when they die. There are no angels but were once men or women. There are three heavens, to one of which all good people go when they are ready, after they have been judged and instructed. There is no general judgment; that is past; every one is judged after he has been here a short time, unless he is met by angels and borne to heaven; and many old people have passed their judgment in the natural world. They have become like little children in innocence and there is nothing to be uncovered.

I will not talk longer now, but will be pleased to continue my story another time.

TALKS TO NARRATOR TWO YEARS LATER.

This is the beginning of conversations for which I have longed (though I have not been impatient) since the short one held with your friend, Mr. F— through your instrumentality, two years ago. Since then I have become acquainted with those in this world who knew you and have kept in close sympathy with you; and these friends of yours on this side have been the means of leading me into a larger life.

I told Mr. F— at that time how glad I was to have the opportunity of speaking to some one I had known, and telling how mistaken I had been, and how greatly I had desired to correct the false impressions my teachings must have made on the minds of all who relied upon my ministry; and then again upon those who were instructed, or rather misled, by them. For a time these thoughts made

me anxious and unhappy; and I longed greatly to send some message to my family and the church, that would give them better conceptions of the life after the death of the body, and of the government of the all-wise and loving Maker and Saviour of men.

When I reflected how such a message, could it be given, would affect them, being almost sure to be rejected, I could only commit the case to the all-wise providence of the Lord, whom I had learned to trust, and wait patiently for an opportunity to help them as they came, one by one, into this world; which opportunity has been granted me in several instances. This is only a prelude to what I want to say, but feel that it is almost enough for you to write at one time.

I will only add that we rejoice to know that the testimonies that have been given you are for the benefit of many; and that the time approaches when they will be called for and given to the public. Good bye.

A BLIND FAITH NO HELP IN TROUBLE.

A narrative of the difficulties which I had to encounter because of my erroneous opinions, and the tenacity with which they were held, may, I hope, be of service to some in showing that blind belief in a dogma can neither give help nor comfort in meeting a real difficulty, either in regard to facts in nature, providence or revelation. The first will readily be admitted by every one of sound judgment. In regard to providence, the reason must give place to faith as long as it is regarded from a merely natural standpoint, and the things of earth as the chief good. But revelation, as the name implies, is the uncovering of hidden things, not the covering up. But more of this as we go on.

The principal trouble in the world is that light is taken for darkness and darkness for light. What appeals simply to reason in religion is rejected as fallacious, even when confirmed by experience. I could refer to many dogmas taught in the church to prove this. For example: that man can be made a new creature in a moment, by faith alone; that knowledge can be infused into one directly by God; that man can be saved by mere mercy; that dead and decomposed bodies can be brought together and raised by a fiat of the Almighty; that God sits on a literal throne and bestows rewards and punishments. Many of these views are deeply imbedded in the minds of people who have depended on the instruction they have received from the pulpits of so-called Christian churches; and it takes time and often painful experiences before they can be uprooted.

I will now give some of my own experiences in illustration. I awakened from what seemed a quiet, deep sleep, in a room where the furniture and surroundings seemed homelike and restful. I was accustomed to being often from home and so to changes in my bedroom, and did not at once recall my last impressions, but remembered that I had committed myself to the Lord's care as my last conscious act. Upon awakening, my first thought was of the Lord's goodness in giving me sweet sleep, and that I was free from all feelings of discomfort.

Upon looking up, a stranger approached my bed with a pleasant smile and asked if I felt refreshed; and said he had the pleasure of bidding me welcome to a new environment, where I would have the opportunity of realizing my highest ideals, and where I would be free from many temptations and annoyances.

I looked at him in some wonder, and said, "It seems strange that I should have come to such a place while asleep. Indeed, it is more than one can hope for until he reaches heaven by death, or by the coming of the Lord."

"But if the Lord had descended and raised you out of the body of earth and brought you by the death of that into a new and heavenly order, are you not ready to accept what his mercy has provided for you, and to enter heartily and joyfully into the life He has opened before you?"

"Why, yes, indeed," I said. "Just tell me what He wants me to do and I am ready to go at it at once."

"The first thing, then," was my answer, "is to array yourself in suitable garments that He has provided, after you have used the water that you will find in the room adjoining, and make yourself ready for further orders."

I arose with alacrity, bathed my hands and face, then stepped into the tank or deep tub; and as the water rose about my body, I felt thrilled as with new life. I did not seem to need towels, for as I emerged from the water, my body was smooth and dry, and ready for the clothing that had been shown me. This I found to fit and to be of fine texture of soft, gray cloth. As I saw my reflection in the water, I wondered at the change that had come to me. I looked more like an immature youth than a man of experience and wisdom.

Upon opening the door and looking out, my attendant greeted me very cordially and asked if I would like to take a morning walk. The sun seemed to be rising and there was about us the freshness of early morning. I replied that I would be delighted, if he would accompany me, to which he assented. As I looked about me, I saw trees and

flowers; houses at a little distance, and animals like sheep and cows grazing. A gentle breeze stirred the leaves and running water enlivened the scene.

"How beautiful and peaceful everything is!" I exclaimed.

My guide smiled and said, "Is there any person whom you specially wish to see,—one that has come before you into the heavenly land?"

"Oh, yes! My mother!" I exclaimed. "I would like to see my mother."

"Let us go in here," he said, leading the way into a neat and pretty garden and cottage; and in the door was my mother,—young and beautiful as an an angel.

My mother knew I was coming and greeted me with every expression of affection and gladness. We embraced each other and then knelt and offered our praise and thanksgiving to our Saviour and Redeemer who had brought us together again.

After our greetings and rejoicings, I asked, "Is this your home, dear mother; do you live alone here?"

"No, my dear son. My home is in a different sphere; but I came to meet and welcome you to this your home, and to give you comfort and instruction in reference to the new plane of life upon which you have entered. You will find many things different from what you have been led to expect, from the interpretations you have put upon the Bible, and because of your rejection of everything that differed from what your church taught. Therefore do not cling to past beliefs, but open your mind to receive any light the Lord may send you. This house is given you as a present home where you may rest and receive your friends

while you are being prepared to find your more permanent home in heaven."

"Is this not a foretaste? Is it not heaven to see you so beautiful and happy; and to feel so buoyant,—so full of joy and gladness?"

"It is indeed a foretaste of enduring happiness, found alone in heaven; but all must stand before the judgment seat and have their motives uncovered; for you know that only the pure in heart can see God."

This was said with the greatest tenderness and gentleness; and she had scarcely finished when my father and relatives and friends came to bid me welcome and rejoice at my deliverance.

There was a period of rejoicing and exchanging experiences; questions asked and answered; asked about the state of the church on earth, and if there were none in which the Lord Jesus Christ alone is acknowledged and worshiped.

I answered, "He is worshiped in all Christian churches; there is no other Saviour for mankind."

"And yet," was answered, "few come into this world from those churches but have wrong or confused ideas about the object of worship; and these have to be corrected, and often with difficulty before any one can enter heaven."

HIS JUDGMENT BEGINS.

I was greatly surprised and troubled by this; but the question was not at that time urged further, only this remark added: It is not well to hold fast to opinions because they were taught in the churches.

After some time all departed and I was left alone. Throwing myself on a couch, I fell into a deep, quiet sleep.

from which I awoke refreshed; but as there was little light about me, I supposed it was night and lay still a long time, thinking over the experiences of the previous day. The more I thought about it, the firmer was my conviction that it must have been a vision or a dream; "but still," I said to myself, "the impression is too vivid and distinct. I will get up and look about me."

But the darkness prevented my seeing any thing clearly. Then I thought, "I will pray." When the suggestion came, "To whom?" and I stopped. "To the Father for the sake of the Son; what does that mean?" Then came to mind, "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it." And I called aloud, "Oh, Lord Jesus, teach me and lead me!" The prayer was scarcely uttered when a light filled the room, and I saw a glorious person whom I at once recognized as my Lord and Saviour. I fell at his feet in speechless adoration, and joy that cannot be expressed filled my whole being. I rather felt than heard him say to me, "Fear not: I am He that liveth and was dead and am alive forever more, and have the keys of death and of hell. Fear not: I will send an angel, though in appearance a man like yourself, to teach you the truths of my Word. Give earnest heed to all that he tells you, and I will again come to you."

The presence disappeared, but the light remained, and also my elation of spirits, for I had seen Jesus and been assured that He rules all things. I waited some time for the appearance of my promised instructor; when a man of rather humble appearance rapped at my door, and asked if he might rest awhile, as he had come on an errand from a distant place. I was not pleased that he should come just then, when I was expecting an angel of commanding pres-

ence; and rather unwillingly permitted him to enter and occupy a seat near the door. I thought he would slip out when the angel came.

He sat for some time in silence and seemed in deep thought, but made no signs of going. At last I asked, "Are you a stranger in these parts?"

And he replied, "Not altogether; indeed, I do not feel myself such in any part of my Lord's domains, since His presence is equally manifest in every place to those who have the senses to perceive it."

"You spoke of coming on an errand," I said. "May I inquire what is the character of that errand; or if I can be of any assistance to you; though," I added, "I am not at liberty to leave the house, as I am expecting a visitor,—one whose coming is of great concern to me."

"Indeed," was the reply. "Is it some one you have known and loved?"

"No," I answered, and hesitated; "it is some one whom I have never seen, but whom I shall know at a glance to be the person expected. It is no one less than an angel," I said with awe. And then I told my vision to this stranger; for there was something about him that inspired confidence.

He listened with the greatest attention and then drew from me the story of my experiences since I came into this world. Questioning me further, I was led to tell much of my former life in the world, the work I had done in the church, the truth (or what I had thought to be such) which I had taught; of my zeal in working for the salvation of souls, and the building up of the church and the spread of the Gospel; and that I had been in a measure successful, though the spirit of worldliness in the church was a great

hindrance. He led me to talk until in my absorption in my story, I forgot what had been uppermost in my mind when he came.

When I paused in my narrative, this man I had thought so lightly of remarked: "The story you have told of your life in the natural world interests me greatly. You have tried to prepare yourself for life in heaven by a life of service to your fellow-men on earth; and that is a good beginning. What, now, is your idea of life in heaven? In what does it consist?"

"Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths have no end."

came into my mind and was uttered almost unconsciously.

"I suppose largely in acts of devotion and praising God for safe deliverance from the temptations and trials that have beset our way; in meeting friends and loved ones and rejoicing together; in contemplating the wisdom and goodness of God; falling at Jesus' feet and loving and praising Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us kings and priests to God and His Father, where we shall reign for ever and ever," I said, appropriating the language of Revelation.

"That may all be true, if understood in the right way," the man replied; "but to do that we must remember that the Lord said to His disciples when they were asking who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven,—that except they should become as little children, they could not enter this kingdom."

HE IS TOLD TO CHOSE HIS OWN WAY OF LIFE.

The man then proceeded to explain the nature of the Lord's rule in the hearts and lives of men; that it is not

by imposing restrictions from without; that these are for the rebellious and disobedient; but to His loyal subjects,—His children,—His law is within their hearts; that He provides for their happiness in proportion to their reception of His loving desire for the salvation and happiness of all. He appealed to my experience as to whether I had not found greater happiness in performing the duties of my calling and in feeling that I had been the agent in bringing help and comfort to others than I would in sitting on a throne and ruling over men.

"Yes, indeed," I exclaimed; "the happiest days of my life were those in which I worked hardest to relieve suffering and help those in distress. I forgot all about myself in the joy of seeing others made happier."

"And would you not be willing to unite with those in this world who give themselves to finding and relieving any who are in distress, or who need a friendly hand to guide them, rather than to ask for yourself glory and honor, ease and wealth?"

The man added, "I was sent to lay this before you, and do not ask you to give an answer at once, but take time to consider it well; for upon your own choice your future destiny will depend. I will return for the answer on the third day. God be with thee!"

He rose to his feet, and as he was leaving me, a look in which solicitude, tenderness and peace were mingled beamed upon me; also his face shone so that my sight was dimmed, and I fell on my knees in speechless wonder. Could this have been the angel for whom I was waiting, I thought? And how did I receive him? And while I was thinking of it and of what he had said, I fell asleep and

dreamed that I was on a lofty mountain, while in the valley below a multitude of people were struggling to climb towards me; but most of them made little progress because their efforts were impeded by their struggles to carry with them heavy loads of bundles of various kinds, and because they did not look well to their steps. There was one path, narrow and straight, that led directly to the top, and once in a while, one would find and walk in it; but to do that he had to let go of the things he had in his hands.

The remembrance of what followed is not pleasant to recall, and at first I shrank from the recital, but that it may be useful to others in inciting them to self-examination, I will not draw back.

WISHES TO BE A KING.

I had thought myself a follower of Him who spurned the power and glory of the world and made Himself of no reputation; but the ambition to sit on a throne and rule over others had not been crushed out. It presented itself in the guise of how much good one could do others by rewarding faithfulness and punishing evil doing; and though I had been warned in the dream that to reach the mountains of light one must cast out of his hands all to which he clung, I was inflated with the idea of being a king, and said to myself, "It is what Jesus promised to His faithful followers; and I did give myself to the work of saving souls and bringing them into the church. To be sure, I did not encounter persecution, nor suffer martyrdom; but I was faithful in preaching the doctrines of the M. E. Church, and tried to live by them myself. I did not run after new ways of thinking, nor try to make myself popular by preaching strange and sensational things, as some did, but clung to the old ways."

While I was thinking on this line, a company of gayly dressed young men came to me; and bowing low, said they were sent to lead me to my throne and crown me as king; that they were commissioned to wait upon me and carry out any commands I was pleased to give.

I was conducted into a large and splendidly furnished room and seated on a throne, while a number of attendants stood around waiting for instructions. I sat, gazing about me, feeling more and more embarrassed and out of place, and wondering what I ought to do. Then the thought came,—a king must know his country and his subjects, and must be trained as to its resources and needs, so as to rule wisely. He must be a king in heart and in mind and I am neither.

I felt abashed and stupid in the presence of the young men about me, and as if they knew I was in no sense fit to be a king among men.

After waiting what seemed to me a considerable time, one of them asked very gravely, "Has your majesty any orders to give in regard to the affairs of his palace or of the kingdom? There are messengers at the door, waiting to be received, and carriers to execute your commands."

PREFERS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

I said I felt my incompetence to govern even myself; how much greater the absurdity of attempting to direct others? "I do not wish to be a king. I prefer to preach the gospel, as that is the thing for which I am fitted and to which I am accustomed."

Then said the man, "We will call together an assembly of people to hear what you have to tell of the plan of salvation." And he went out and blew a trumpet, and soon

there was gathered in a hall a crowd of people, who seated themselves about an elevation upon which was a desk or pulpit to which I was led, and left, facing the assembly.

I had been told to explain the plan of salvation, and began by saying: "The Bible tells us that God had made man upright and placed him in the Garden of Eden; that man disobeyed his commands not to eat of the tree of knowledge; that thereby man fell from his state of innocence, was turned out of the Garden, provoked the displeasure of the Almighty, and the whole race would have perished, had not the Son of God interposed and offered to suffer in man's place. This offer was accepted; and in the fullness of time Jesus Christ was born into the world, bore man's load of sin, suffered in his stead on the cross, where He shed His most precious blood and made full atonement for the sin of Adam, and provision whereby all who believe in Him shall receive forgiveness of their sins and be made clean and holy by the application of His blood to their hearts and consciences. This thousands have proved by their own experiences; and you, my friends,—many of you, no doubt, have been partakers of the same, as you will have opportunity to testify at the close of this public service."

When I had finished speaking, I called, "Will some one please start the hymn, 'Amazing grace,—how sweet the sound!' but was surprised that no one responded; so I led the singing myself, a few voices joining in.

A man in the assembly rose and said he would like to ask the speaker a few questions; to which I answered, "Certainly!" And he proceeded. "Will you please explain how it was that God who is mercy itself and love itself

could inflict upon an innocent race the penalty of one man's sins; and also how God, who declared Himself to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men could need to be placated; least of all could be pleased to lay upon an innocent one the punishment of the guilty," and sat down.

I answered, "Though God is love, His law had been violated and His displeasure against sin had to be exhibited or manifested by the infliction of the penalty that had been announced, 'In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die.'"

"But according to your teaching, he didn't die!" exclaimed another. "On the contrary, he lived hundreds of years and begat sons and daughters."

This was more than I was prepared to meet; and the first speaker, seeing my confusion, said, "We will consider the second question."

I began to say, "Though God is one in essence, He is divided into three persons," when a warning hand was raised where I stood and a voice terrible in its rebuke stopped me at the word, "essence," and finished the sentence, "That God is One in person and in essence is the corner-stone of the whole Christian faith, the one foundation-stone on which all true faith must rest. Therefore whoever teaches contrary to this is cast down among the unbelievers. But because this man speaks from the lips what he has been taught in the churches of Christendom, but in his heart has acknowledged a Divine and lived in charity, and tried from good will to help his fellow-men, he is capable of being instructed, but must not teach, lest he should lead astray the innocent and credulous who come here from the Christian world."

He continued to speak for some time in proof that both

the Old and New Testaments teach explicitly the Oneness of the Divine Being, and that He became incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ, to redeem and save mankind, by presenting in visible form to angels and men, one upon whom they could fix their affections and thoughts.

I listened in wonder and a certain delight in having these things that had always been a mystery to me made so plain. Then turning to me, he said, "You are not rejected for having believed and taught doctrines contrary to this, since you held them innocently, believing they came from the Word, and did not make them excuse any evils that you saw to be such in yourself and others.

You are therefore invited to become a resident in a school of instruction where you will be prepared for a life of active usefulness in your chosen field of labor,—a minister of the Gospel of glad tidings to many who need your help.

GOES TO SCHOOL.

I went with the speaker, (who was the angel who had come in disguise to instruct, and test my motives), to the place of instruction, where I was welcomed and provided for; and where all my past theological beliefs were reviewed and corrected, by the opening of the spiritual sense of the Word of the Lord, according to the law of correspondence.

When I was well established in this truth, I had a great desire to send a message back to earth, which was permitted by the call of Mr. F—, two years ago; since which time I have been permitted to instruct and comfort many upon their entrance into this world with the same mistaken views as I had.

I am working and learning and looking forward with hope to my full deliverance and entrance into my heavenly home.

Good bye for the present.

"Do I forget? O no!
For memory's golden chain
Shall bind my heart to the hearts below,
Till they meet and touch again."

CHAPTER VII.

"The entrance of thy Word giveth light. It giveth understanding to the simple."—Psa. cxix, 130.

"For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light; and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life."—Prov. vi, 23.

*A Brother of the Narrator gives a Description of his Early Experiences in the Spiritual World, and the Lessons Learned from them.**

I have many things to say to you, my dear sister, in regard to my experiences since leaving the natural world. There had been a year and more of preparation in loosening the ties that bound me to earth, in that I had not been able to attend to the duties of my profession. This made it easier for me to quit the world than if I had been suddenly brought away from business and family ties. There had been a gradual letting go of my interest in and hold on the things that had occupied so much of my time, that I had neglected the claims of the more important spiritual part, which was left to starve for want of nourishment; I thought I had no time to give to that part of my nature, believing that God had in some way provided for it, if I did the right thing in relation to my family and fellow-men; and I tried to do this to the best of my ability. I had no idea that it made such difference whether I read the Bible and attended church or not. There seemed to be little in the preaching

*The author of this narrative was brave and loyal in all civil, social and domestic relations. He enlisted as a soldier in the Civil War when under twenty years of age, and continued in the service amid much hardship and danger the four years it lasted. Later, as a lawyer, member of the legislature of his state, and of the Central Committee of his political party, and as attorney for his county, he upheld justice, temperance and the enforcement of law.

that appealed to my higher nature, and I was not earnest enough in the matter to take the trouble to search for more light, as I might have done. I made little of learning the meaning of the Bible, and did not know that it is the light by which the spirit sees the road that leads to heaven, although it is so stated in the Psalms in several places.

I hated to grow old and kept the thought of death in the background, living as much as possible in the present. When our older brother died, it was a great shock, and I did not recover my usual health and courage after attending his funeral. His death seemed to bring home to me the fact that I, too, should make preparation for my family in case I should be suddenly taken, as he was. But it did not occur to me that I needed to make any special preparation for myself. I thought I must reap the reward of my life-work and no prayers could change that.

This was the state I was in when stricken into unconsciousness several months later; and though I lived more than a year afterward, I was not myself again. That period left only a faint impression, as one in a dream might recall the scenes that passed through the mind. This is all I need to say of my earth life. The record of that is in your keeping.

After a short period of acute suffering that I faintly remember, I slept and awakened in a room like the one in my home, and looking up saw a familiar face smiling into mine, and a voice that sounded like a strain of music long ago heard said, "I have come to bid you welcome to the land of joy and peace."

I said, "I am delighted to see you, Brother T., but I am surprised at seeing you looking so well."

I had no thought but that he had come from his home in Illinois to make me a visit and that he had recovered his health.

He smiled again and said, "You will be still more surprised to see other friends who have come to call on you. If you feel rested, you may bathe and dress before receiving them."

I had strength to rise without assistance, and found water in my room, the touch of which seemed to give me renewed vitality; and when I had dressed in what seemed my business suit, I stepped out of my room into the street of a city, where Brother T. joined me, and soon Brother John appeared to be coming to meet us. Before I could speak he said, "Welcome, dear Louis, to this land of peace."

I shook as in a chill, and he continued:

"I am so glad that you are set free at last from that prisonhouse of clay. I have watched over you since I came into this world and longed for your release since you were so near the border; but the waiting has not been in vain. You are better prepared to be instructed than if you had come suddenly, as I did."

This was said as we walked along in the street. I was too much surprised to answer and was pondering in my mind whether I was dreaming or awake. As we neared a beautiful yard in which stood a house, I stopped and said, "John, I seem to be awake. I feel well and stronger than I have for some time; but I cannot understand the situation. I see you plainly, but I certainly must be dreaming, for you surely died more than a year ago. I attended to the interment of your body; and yet I see you as plainly as ever I did and hear you speak. Can you explain the mystery?"

He smiled and said, "I am in the spiritual world, where man lives after his body dies. You see I am not dead. You, too, are in the same world and have left your body and to-day it will be buried in the ground; for this is the third day since you were called dead and the family are preparing for your funeral.

THE CHANGE CALLED DEATH NOT TO BE DREADED.

I was permitted to see that this was so. I turned again to John and said, "Then is this all there is of death? I thought it was something dreadful and I see it is not to be dreaded at all."

He answered, "On the contrary it is the greatest blessing that one can imagine. I have found it so."

He then asked, "How do you like the looks of this yard and house?"

I said, "If there were any way I could pay for it, I would like to own it."

He said, "Then we will look inside and see if it suits you as well as it looks from the outside."

It was even better fitted to my mind, and I exclaimed, "See how perfectly suited it is to my wants! Library furnished with law books and paper to write, and couch and chairs that suit me exactly. But how can one earn anything in this world? It is not like the one I left in the way of business, I suppose."

"No," he said; "the Lord provides for us here without money and without price. This is the house you have builded while in the natural world you tried to serve your country and your fellow-men, and now you are welcome to all that can make you happy. This is the way the Lord rewards his children for faithful service."

I was overwhelmed by this answer and wept in joy and thankfulness. But soon I said, "This is not the way the Bible tells us to expect death. It says that we must be raised out of the grave at the day of judgment and stand before the great white throne with all the rest of the world of mankind, and the world be burned. I have heard that since I was a little boy, and it has always been a horror to me."

John said, "If you had read the books I sent you, you might have been relieved of this impression and found the Bible not to be understood in the way you had been taught to read and believe it."

"It does not mean what it says, then?" I asked.

"Not in the letter but in the spirit it is literally true. You have applied it to external things and in that sense it is not literally true that every one stands before a great white throne; but in spirit it is true, as you will find later.

"Now you are to rest and see your friends, and there is nothing in the judgment any honest-hearted man need to fear. Only hypocrites have cause to tremble."

PEOPLE NOT CHANGED BY DEATH.

I was then seated and a rap at the door made me turn. Words cannot describe my joy and amazement to see mother so young and beautiful that I wept for joy and clasped her in my arms, so I could make sure it was herself. I did not see any one else at first, but she said, "And do you know this man who is with me?"

I looked but a moment and exclaimed, "Father, dear, dear father! Is this really true that you are not dead and in the grave, but a man all over, and young and strong? Why are we left so in the dark about the change called death?"

Again it was said, "If you had read the books, you need not have been in the dark. The Lord sent the light, but He could not make you see it, when you would not read His message."

I said, "Do you mean those books that tell what Swedenborg saw in the world of spirits? I thought you and M— had turned to spiritism, and hoped you might be saved, because you meant right; but I didn't want to be caught in any such snare."

He smiled, and turning to father, said, "Do you think Swedenborg was mistaken about what he wrote in regard to this world and heaven and the Bible?"

Father shook his head gently and answered, "I thought about as Louis has said when I was in the natural world, but after I became a citizen of this intermediate state, I found that those who had read Swedenborg were teachers of truths that opened heaven to all who received them. I found that his books are here and in heaven, and are the text-books in all the schools."

I wondered more and more to hear this, and said, "Then I have made a great mistake, and must begin to learn what I rejected as imposture in that world. But I want first to talk with you all about many things."

And then followed a conversation that would be too long to write, but which convinced me that I, and not you had made the mistake in regard to the writings of the Church of the New Jerusalem, and that Mr. T— and John had wisdom beyond what I had ever imagined in explaining the meaning of the Bible.

I want now to return to the time when I first saw father and mother. They were both as young and strong

beautiful as angels might be, and when I remarked this to John, he replied, "That is what they are; angels who are in the middle heaven, where they are with other angels from the earth you have just left. There are no angels but were once men and women on some earth, and the churches are all wrong in their teaching on the subject."

One of the things that father said surprised me,—that he found many things different from the way the churches taught, and their most serious mistake is in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is God of heaven and earth and there is no other Divine Being. When I said, "How is man to be saved, if He did not take the guilty sinner's place and make atonement for him to the Father?" father answered, "That is all wrong. There is no other Father. As He Himself said, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'"

"Then," I said, "I must learn a new theology besides a new interpretation of the Bible."

"They are bound together,—the internal sense of the Word, as we call the Bible, and the doctrines about who is the Lord God of heaven and earth. You will find both taught in the writings of the Church of the New Jerusalem," was the answer.

I wondered if these were the same I had in the natural world, but waited until he added, "They are in the natural world and you had them in substance in your library."

Then I said, "That settles the matter about John and M. Having made a wise choice."

THE BOOK OF LIFE IS OPENED.

I will now proceed to give some experiences that I hope may be useful to some of my friends that may read this

narrative. I was soon settled and ready to meet whatever might come to me. I was left alone and reviewed my life in the light of what I had heard and was much ashamed of many things I had said and done. All my habits of thought and things I had forgotten stood out in clear light, and beside them the perfect life of the Saviour who did no sin and never yielded to temptation. I did not try to excuse myself, but wept like a child and fell on my knees, crying, "Unclean! unclean! God be merciful to me a sinner!"

I do not know how long I was thus alone and in the agonies of almost despair at ever being fit for the society of father and mother and their friends; for I slept many hours, it seemed; and when I wakened, there was an angel face smiling into mine, and I knew my own little boy by his likeness to his mother, my dear wife, and I clasped him to my heart, and exclaimed, "Then you are not ashamed to own your father, though he is unworthy of your love."

REUNION OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

He said, "Father, all good is from the Lord, and we can never claim anything that we have received. We all love you, for I was brought up by the same parents that you were; only mother came after I had been with father in his home, and now we are so happy. Before mother came, Aunt Sarah took care of our home and of me. Now you are to come and visit us. They are all waiting to see you."

"You forget," I said, "that I am not as good as the others, and cannot get into heaven with these cloth on."

But he drew me along, and in the joy of his joy and love. I forgot myself and found my clothing changed into a white robe. While we walked along, I heard music as

from a number of instruments and voices, chanting praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. I joined in with all my heart, and we came to the door of a beautiful mansion, where were gathered the whole family—George and Linnie and Sarah and the little babe that had never had a name on earth*—now a beautiful woman, much like mother and bearing the same name. John and Bro. T. were there to rejoice in my deliverance. I wept much and covered my face in shame that I was not more worthy of all this blessedness.

But they all comforted me and spoke of the good I had done and of my brave fight against wrong, and that I had been true to my duty as I saw it, saying, "One is not judged by the light of others, and you did not reject what you saw to be the truth. Welcome to our hearts and homes."

I soon gave myself to the joy of the occasion and found comfort in their assurance that the Lord is not angry and never turns away from any one who wishes to do right, but is more tender than any earthly parent can be; that all love is from Him. I was delighted to hear this and resolved to give my whole soul to whatever He wanted me to do.

I cannot describe the joy of that meeting; how each one made me happy by seeing them all so beautiful and happy, and to find my own little boy among and one of them.

I soon returned to the home that had been given to me and found Mr. T. and John there before me. We talked for some time, and then I was again left alone, and went over in my mind all that I had seen and heard, then slept and wakened refreshed. I had learned that when I needed advice, I had only to think earnestly of the one I

*All died in infancy.

wished to speak to, and I thought that as John had introduced me to my home, he could advise me as to the next step to take. So I called to him and he responded at once, and advised me to seek from the Lord a guide to instruct me as to my duties. I prayed, and He sent Mr. T., who became my companion.

LIGHT FROM THE WORD.

At first I could see but a little distance and things looked dim and hazy when I walked about. There was no sun visible and the moon shone as if under a light cloud. But when I studied the Bible more and began to understand its meaning, the light increased. The sun would occasionally appear behind the clouds. This encouraged me to persevere and I soon found my house and garden improved and new plants growing in my yard. I was then given a home near Brother T. and he has been a brother indeed. He has helped me into the light and I have been permitted to help him in his work for others. We have been much together and taken great comfort in helping some we knew in the natural world. I have not yet outgrown my natural memory nor my natural affections, though I have outgrown my prejudice and partiality for places and for people who were of my nationality or not, as the case might be. I love goodness wherever I find it and have made myself acquainted with truths for the sake of the good I found in them. I am happy in serving the human race in the way of enforcing the laws of righteousness whenever I find them broken; and in encouraging any who are faint-hearted to trust in the Lord and help themselves in all right ways.

to resist the infernal influences that would prevent their progress in the ways that lead to heaven.

For instance,—I found a man who wanted to do right, beset by another who had known he was a member of a secret order in the natural world, and claimed that he must not expose anything that had been done in their Chapter because of his oath. I admonished him at once to break loose from all former bonds, and stand squarely on the law of righteousness as between men. He listened, shook himself free and has gone to his home in heaven.

THE LORD'S MERCY AND LEADING.

There is no limit to be placed upon the mercy of the Lord, who leads and guides every one in the best way. Many come here from the Christian world who have the most distorted views of the moral government of the Lord and find themselves at sea about everything.

Question—What light do those have that go there with wrong and narrow views?

They have light in this world according to their preceptions of truth; to many there is only the faintest gleam to direct them, and they stumble about, asking where they can find lodging until morning, thinking it is night; and they are provided with a kind of shelter and led to seek knowledge by their wants. They are then instructed as to the way to get their wants supplied and given lessons in the laws of the Divine order. If they are teachable, they soon find that life improves, as they are wiser and more

willing to learn. Many are led in this way into heavenly character and find their place without suffering. Those who will not heed advice are made to feel the force of law by suffering in various ways. For all there is a kind welcome and many do not see the dark side of things at all, but are gently guided to their homes and know the house of their own building when they see it. Many have made homes in heaven in very great discouragement and sorrow and some with but few outward trials. It is not useful to court sorrow, but rather the contrary. To be happy is the natural desire of all and it is the effort of the Divine Province to bestow all that will contribute to this as fully as man is prepared to use and not abuse his bounties.

Question—What advice shall I give to a poor girl who is thinking of marrying a man for a home?

Warn her against marrying for anything like that. She had better go to jail than marry a man she does not love. Marriages for convenience are a profanation. My advice would always be (my own experience in this world making the basis) that marriage without love is a greater evil than murder, if the murder is not premeditated. It shuts all doors to heaven and makes hell more a master than the murder of the body would. You can do her more good than any one else. My advice would be to make the case as strong as you can. I advise that you make no mistaken kindness to spare her feelings; that she marry no one until she knows her own heart better and until she knows what marriage means in the true sense. My advice to any woman would be, wait until your heart makes your head consent and then there will not be much danger of mistake.

Question—What is the character of the clothing worn in that world?

Our clothing is an exact representation of our spiritual affection. If we are not in charity toward each other, our clothing is dark and unsightly; and if we are filled with envy toward each other, our clothing is horribly defiled and filthy. Every one may be known by his dress.

Question—How do you get your clothes?

They appear on our persons as we go forth to our work. We dress ourselves, as you do, with garments provided in our houses; and when we go out are seen by others according to our state of affection for truth and good.

Question—What about the style?

Much the same style as in that world, when we first come, but changed according to our employment. If one is appointed to a special work, he is given a garment to indicate the character of his employment. If any one makes a mistake, he sees a change in his raiment and is admonished in this way to examine and correct his error. If he does not heed this, he sees more evidence that something is wrong and must be corrected at once. But if any one will not be corrected in this way, he is admonished by an angel, who seeks to prevent any one from falling away from the state to which he has been raised.

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER VIII

This chapter gives a brief history of a man of strong personality, intelligence, firmness, executive ability and upright life.

He was intimately associated with the family of the narrator as neighbor, physician and friend. He was more than fourscore years of age before he retired from active professional life, after which he spent several years in retirement, in reading and meditation in his home, esteemed and loved in his church and neighborhood.

He passed peacefully away in his ninetieth year, about eleven years before this narrative was given. The wife of his youth had preceeded him thirty-eight years, after thirty years of married life.

A man who had been his pastor during several years of his active life said of him in a funeral address: "He was a type too seldom found, but when found they are centers of strength, around which weaker natures rally. Intense in his convictions, he supported them with voice, pen and purse. Naturally conservative and slow to arrive at con-

clusions, no one was in doubt as to what he did believe when a conclusion was reached. By nature he was inclined to be intolerant. He despised mental and moral weakness.

"He could not endure weakness in dealing with wrong. He was a man of strong passions and a great ambition. In him were conflicts fiercer and harder than any waged among the screaming of shells or the clash of swords. Year after year he prayed and sought strength from on High and through grace conquered himself."

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things."—Rev. xxi 7.

"I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you."—Hab. i 5.

INTRODUCTION.

My dear Mrs. —, one of the many surprises that has come to me since I entered this wonderful world, of which I had such mistaken and erroneous ideas, is that it is so near the former world; indeed may be said to overlap it; and I find here and there that points of communication have been opened in these latter days, and that some of these are according to the laws of order, in that there are persons still living in the natural world who love truth for its own sake, whose plane of thought is in harmony with angelic spirits. I am most happy to find you, whom I knew and esteemed in the natural world, among these.

I have no disposition to intrude myself or my experiences upon any one uninvited; but your husband, who has been very helpful to me since I came here, and for whom you will remember I had great respect and affection in the former world, has assured me that you would not consider

my desire to renew my acquaintance in that light, and that what I have to tell will be of great interest to you and may be of profit to others; for it is known here that it is not for yourself alone that you have been made acquainted with what is hidden from the generality of mankind. With these introductory remarks I must bid you good bye for to-day, but will resume if opportunity is afforded.

The following day, and in short conversations at intervals during several months this narrative was given.

EARLY HISTORY AND RELIGION.

I will now begin with an account of my early life in a rugged part of New England nearly a century ago, on a small farm near a village, where I, with others of the family, attended school and church. I had what is called a good constitution and developed in boyhood a love for gathering knowledge beyond most of my associates. I studied, taught school, and worked alternately; later went to college and after some years studied and began the practice of medicine; was in the army as surgeon during the Civil War, and afterward lived in.....where my life ended in the natural world, at what is considered an advanced age.

As to religion, I was unswervingly loyal to the faith and polity of the Presbyterian church, and considered it presumptuous on the part of a layman to call in question either the doctrines or usages that had been established by the wise and good men who had labored for and died in the faith. I held myself free to profit by the scientific discoveries in the domain of natural learning, such as medicine and surgery; but the suggestion of anything new

religion excited my suspicion of laxity in morals or skepticism in belief, and so I shut my eyes and ears against it.

After bodily infirmity prevented active interest in and contact with the activities of life, the asperities of my nature were much modified and softened, which I now see to have been a merciful preparation for my entrance into a new state of life.

A GREAT SURPRISE.

When I was first informed that I had made the change called on the earth, death, but on this side birth or resurrection, I gazed at my informant in undisguised amazement; but being accustomed to deliberation in both speech and movement I did not speak, but began to reflect that it might be so, as I had reached an age when this change is expected. I had wakened some time before, in surroundings somewhat new and changed, though in a comfortably furnished room with windows opening toward the east, judging from the rosy light I beheld without. I had been conscious of a presence gentle and soothing, but saw no one when I opened my eyes. As I was lying with faculties partially aroused and vision gradually clearing, I became conscious of a presence strong and uplifting, and looking up a friendly face beamed upon me and a kindly voice bade me welcome to the land of my hopes and desires, where failing strength is restored and the infirmities of age give place to the vigor of renewed youth.

"After informing you that this change has come to you through the resurrection of your spirit out of the natural body that no longer served its desires, I will leave you to

bathe and dress and will then be at your service as guide or instructor, as you may desire."

He then left me; and after some reflection, I thought the best way to test the truth of what had been told me was to follow instructions. I rose slowly and going to the large vessel of water I found near, bathed hands and face and finally my whole body, after which I felt much refreshed, and proceeded to dress in clothing such as I had worn when practicing my profession. Then opening the door, I beheld my guide, who seemed much pleased at my appearance, and greeting me in a very friendly manner, asked me if I felt like taking a walk. He said that he would take pleasure in showing me around and answering any questions that might puzzle me as a new-comer, until I found my home and friends.

I answered that I would be greatly obliged by a further explanation of the situation in which I found myself, and as to how I was expected to act or demean myself in these new conditions.

The man answered, "It is of great importance that you should understand that you have been raised out of the natural body and from the natural world; that you are a spiritual man in a spiritual world, where you will meet and become acquainted with a new order and arrangement adapted to the development of man on a higher plane of his nature. But first let us find a home where you may refresh yourself and receive friends whom you desire to meet again.

FINDS HOME AND WIFE.

I thought at once of the wife of my youth and early manhood, but did not speak, while we walked along a

beautifully shaded street for a little distance, until we stood in front of a neat house. Standing in the door was my wife, more beautiful than the day we were married. Drawn by an impulse I could not resist, I hastened toward her and clasping her in my arms, wept aloud for very joy and thankfulness. For a time I could think of nothing else except the joy of being with her and seeing her so well and happy. I then turned to speak to my guide, who stood near, a smile of kindly sympathy lighting his face.

"So you have found the essential of home at once, and do not need to be asked in regard to the surroundings," he said.

"They are all a reasonable man could desire," I answered, glancing about me; and added, "Will you not come in and meet my wife and share my joy?"

"Not at present," the man answered, and disappeared among the trees.

After rejoicing together for some time, I asked, "Is this your home, and have you been living alone, waiting for me?"

She replied, "This has not been my home. I came from a region where the light is much brighter and the land much fairer than this; though I have never been far from you and have watched over you and waited your coming to make my happiness complete. Few coming directly from earth can bear the light of that heavenly land. This is an intermediate world, where all who love the laws of the Lord are instructed and prepared for their home in heaven. I think you will not be long here, for you have tried to do right and your nature has been softened by the

long waiting. In comparative helplessness you have been patient and trustful. You will soon return into the states of your more active life and pass judgment upon what might have been better. But now we will enjoy the present and meet relatives and friends who will rejoice at your coming."

MEETS KINDRED AND FRIENDS.

I will not attempt to describe the states of emotion through which I passed while hearing this. She had scarcely finished when parents and friends came, and one after another bade me a hearty welcome to my new home in the land of promise.

The only incident worthy of mention in these experiences is that connected with meeting my father, who had always been, it seemed to me, if not severe, rather stern and reticent in manner, so that he was regarded as cold and unsympathetic. This must have been wholly exterior, for now his face beamed with pleasure. He folded me in his arms and with many terms of endearment, assured me of his love and sympathy and joy that I had been loyal and true to my convictions and was now in a state to be instructed and prepared for heaven.

"And am I not in heaven?" I asked in amazement. "To be with you all again;" and I looked at my wife; "to see you so young and vigorous and happy, and to feel the thrill of life and health in my whole being—surely this can be nothing but a foretaste of heavenly bliss to be fully realized when I am received into the presence of Christ."

I noticed that there was no response to this remark of mine and proceeded to inquire: "Are not my hopes well

founded, since I do not claim to myself any merit, but trust solely to what Christ has done for me? All my hopes are in His merit and righteousness."

"That is well," replied my father. "None of us can claim merit or reward for any good we have done, since all good is from the Lord Jesus Christ, whom all the heavens adore as the one Creator and Saviour.

"You speak of *heavens*, as though there might be more than one."

"Did not Paul speak of being caught up into the *third*? You will find, my dear son, that there are many *things* to be learned and some of them quite different from the way you have been taught. Be prepared for many surprises and do not stumble nor turn away from any teaching simply because it is new. Was not the last message of the Lord to His Church, 'Behold, I make all things new?' And have we not the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness?"

"Yes, yes," I said; "and is this the new earth? And is the day of judgment at hand, when the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll and the elements melt with fervent heat?"—my thought recalling the imagery made familiar by many readings.

"There is nothing at hand or afar off that need cause alarm to any one whose hope is in the Saviour of men. You have only to follow the guide He may send you to find all that you have desired and longed for; but you must not expect to climb the mountain at one bound, for all progress in wisdom is made here step by step as in the former world. You are now a spirit and in the spiritual

world; not on earth, nor yet in heaven, but in a place intermediate, an ante-chamber to heaven for the good, and a place of judgment and rebuke for the evil. Here we must leave you to the tender care and guidance of the Lord's angels who will come as you call for help and instruction. Good bye for the present."

I found myself alone, much bewildered by what had been said to me. That a great change had come to me was evident; not only that I had seen and conversed with those I knew to have been long dead (as we used to say); for this might have been a vision or a dream. But I was in new surroundings and my body no longer frail and trembling. I walked swiftly about the room and out into the garden and street to test my agility and strength, which I found increased by exercise. I spoke aloud, as no one was in sight, to try my voice and power of expression. I called aloud, "Where am I? What is before me?" But there was no answer. I sat down to think and grew more and more bewildered. Then I recalled what had been told me; but said to myself, "The Bible says nothing about an intermediate world, though I know that some in the natural world believed and taught that there was such a place."

ACCOSTS A STRANGER.

I was too much excited to think calmly and decided to go out and find what discoveries I could make. I had not gone far when I saw a man of dignified bearing coming to meet me, who would have passed on, apparently, had I not accosted him with the inquiry, "Will you be so good as to inform me as to the name of this country and the

character of its inhabitants; unless you are, like myself, a stranger in the place. From your appearance and manner I judge that you are acquainted here, and from the expression of kindness in your face, I have been encouraged to speak to you."

The man's face lighted with a look of interest and sympathy, as he answered, "My mission here is to look for any person who may be in need of instruction or help in becoming acquainted with the order and laws of this world, where all come first when raised out of their natural bodies and enter upon a life, for which few have made adequate preparation or received suitable instruction. This is, as you have been told, a world of tests, where every one's motives are uncovered and his character disclosed by the choice of companionship and employment, which he is allowed to make with perfect freedom, and under conditions that prevent interference or mistake. You had a long life in the natural world and many opportunities of gaining knowledge and fitting yourself for large usefulness among your fellow-men. You had the Bible, in which are revealed the laws of spiritual life and the opportunity to become acquainted with the order that exists in heaven, which is that all should love others more than themselves, and the Lord above all things."

"Yes," I answered, "all that is true, and I confess to have fallen short in many ways, and would have no hope of salvation but for the provisions of the Gospel, by which salvation is possible through the atonement made by the sufferings and death of Christ, who bore our sins and died in our stead. Through His merit I have hoped for a place in heaven."

THE ANGEL EXPLORES HIS BELIEFS.

The man looked at me searchingly. We had been walking slowly and now came to a large oak, under which was a seat unoccupied, upon which my companion seated himself inviting me to do the same. We sat silent for a time, when he asked, "What is your opinion of heaven and the employments of its inhabitants?"

I had really no very definite ideas, only that it is a place of rest and peace, where there is no sin or sorrow; where the saved enjoy the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ; also that it is a land of beauty and eternal youth; where I hoped to see things more clearly and be freed from temptation and sin.

I said something like this, and then added: "But before reaching that blessed place, I expected to be changed in some miraculous manner, when the Lord should descend and call all before Him for judgment. But here I am, something of youth restored, in a world like that in which I have always lived. I have certainly seen my wife and others who long since had left their bodies in the grave, now in better forms, yet still like themselves. I am quite bewildered by all this—so unlike what I read in the Bible and heard preached in the church, which I had no doubt was the pillar and ground of the truth."

"The church is in man according to his understanding of the truth," was the reply. "Did you understand the teachings of your church? Did they commend themselves to your reason and to your highest conception of justice and right? Did they lead you to love and reverence the Author of the Bible as just and loving in all His dealings with men; the Christian and the heathen alike being His

offspring and in no sense responsible for their place in the world and their opportunities for gaining a knowledge of His ways of saving men?"

He paused, waiting for an answer, but I had none to give; for I could not confess my church deficient in any way, and was not ready to arraign the government of the Almighty as imperfect or partial.

At length the man proceeded. "A man's highest conceptions of goodness and wisdom fall far short of the absolute perfections of the Maker of all things and the Father of all men. To ascribe to Him qualities and actions that are below these, is to defame and reproach His essence and His revelation. You hoped for salvation by believing on His name and trusting in His merits. How were those to be saved who did not know of the coming and redemptive work of the Saviour? Were they to be condemned for not accepting a salvation that was never offered to them?"

I replied, "That is a question that has puzzled and troubled me at times and for which I have found no answer. I put it away, saying, The Judge of all the earth will do right and this is one of the mysteries that the future alone can reveal."

"And the multitude about you," he continued; "the heedless, unthinking and reckless; the young and unconverted, who are stricken down and come unprepared into the spiritual world and to the throne of judgment; what provision did your theology make for them?"

"We could only leave them in the hands of God," I replied.

"And make no effort to warn and save them?" "Oh, yes," I answered, "churches were built, the gospel preached, missionaries sent to teach the heathen and home mission-

aries supported; but all these efforts could reach and save only the chosen few: Bibles were printed and circulated so that all might know if they wished and would make effort."

"But what is to become of the many who did not see their need?" was asked.

I replied, "I do not know of any help for them."

"Would you leave a reckless, thoughtless child of your own—or, indeed, of any one—to perish, when he had fallen into a pit dugged by an enemy and covered over, as many are, with alluring devices? Would you be content to enjoy the comforts and luxuries of home with the cries of such sounding in your ears?"

"No, no," I said, "That would be impossible. I have never refused to give aid to suffering people who called upon me professionally, whether they could pay or not."

"But have you sought out the needy and ignorant and helped them to find the path of life and walk in it? Have you not been relentless and unforgiving to the idle and prodigal?"

"Yes," I said, "I had no use for that class and didn't want them about me. I could not always be laboring with them, and sent them adrift."

"And made them feel you wished to have nothing to do with them," my friend added.

"Yes, I did—I suppose, though if they had wanted to do better I would have helped them."

I have given this because it was a prelude to what followed, and shows the steps by which one is led out of error.

"What was the Savior's mission into the world of nature?" was asked.

"To seek and save the lost," came into my mind; also,

"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

"That is well answered."

"The whole world was lost in sin," I said; "and no one could have been saved had not Christ come and made atonement to the Father, therefore we are justified by faith in Him without the deeds of the law."

My thought on these subjects seemed to be drawn from me and placed before my view; for I was not used to talking on theological subjects.

Here the matter was dropped for the time and I was asked, "Have you any preferences as to an employment by which you can aid your fellow-men?"

I was rather startled by this question and looked at the man inquiringly, who added, "All happiness is from use; and it is a law of the spiritual world that every one should have the employment for which he is best fitted. In your younger days you taught school. That is a useful calling."

He waited for my answer.

"Do you have schools here as on earth?" I said. "And what is taught in them? I beg to ask."

"There are many kinds of instruction given, suited to the state of the learner. Indeed, few come here who do not need instruction on many points; and so there are many grades of schools and of teachers. The ones most needed by adults are those that explain the meaning of the Bible and how it is to be read."

"There were things in the Bible, mysteries that were above reason; but I thought they belonged to the earth and would be made plain in heaven," was my answer, "and that I must wait until then to have them explained."

ACCEPTS OFFER OF INSTRUCTION.

After a little time spent in silence, the man asked, "Would you like to visit a school for Bible study, where you may ask and have explained the questions that have troubled you?"

"Yes, very much," I replied, "if there is such an one."

We went together to a large building where I was received as a student. An apartment was given me, and I was told to rest and refresh myself, and that the following day I would be assigned a place where I would have all the opportunities that I desired and could use.

This was the beginning of heart-searching experiences, by which I was led to see, by the light of truth, that my thought of God and His Word had been almost wholly natural and much of my conduct in every relation of life extremely faulty and from worldly motives. I spent many hours in this review, until thoroughly humbled and penitent, I cried to the Lord for mercy and help to live as He had designed me to live, and was willing to render any service to any creature, wherever found, feeling that none could be more undeserving than myself.

I have told you that my nature was softened in my old age. But for this I do not see how I could have been saved at all; for when the old states of asperity and hardness returned, the conflict was all I could endure. At the first mention that my understanding of the Bible was wrong and the interpretations of my church misleading, I became very indignant that the wisdom of the wise in the church should be called in question and was about to leave the school, when one morning I was surprised and delighted by a call from your husband. He looked young and strong.

and I could feel at once that he was free from all the shadows that perplexed and almost overwhelmed me. I will not attempt to describe this meeting. A lost child again in the arms of its mother, could hardly feel greater relief and joy than I, and he seemed equally happy at finding me. He said he had been directed by an angel to this house, where he would find one that needed help.

I laid before him all my perplexity and he showed me gently and patiently the errors of my past beliefs and unfolded the mysteries of the Bible by a new method of interpretation which he said he had known in the natural world, and of which I had heard him speak so far as I allowed. Then I recalled the admonition of my father, not to reject any teaching because it is new and not in accord with what I had held. We talked long and earnestly and I was prepared to accept and profit by the teaching given by the instructors, who, I later found, were angel men sent by the Lord to open blind eyes.

After this I frequently saw and conversed with Mr. — and was permitted to visit and spend some time among his people, from whom I received many marks of interest and affection. I could not for long bear the strong light in which they live, but found my own light increasing and my surroundings improved, as I yielded to the new instruction.

I had been what seemed a long time in the school. It was not long after my awakening when I was brought here, as I have told before. At first I had time given me to reflect on what I had heard; to look about me; to associate with the inmates of the school; to ask questions; to learn in what ways this differed from the former state of things;

to become accustomed to the new order and language, which latter is universal, I was told, throughout the universe, and expresses the quality of the things signified. To each person is also given a name that signifies his chief characteristic. To my friend, "he of the silver speech;" to myself, a name the quality of which is, "the man of caution;" or "the conservative," involving something of doubt, until the thing is proven.

Nothing was urged upon me, but everything offered for my use; lectures, books, teachers; but I was left in freedom to use or turn from them. After a time I began to find that I could not continue in this negative state; that I must go to work and decide things for myself. There were questions to be discussed in the different departments and I was free to choose to which I would give attention.

I decided upon this: "Whether man has ability to think truth and will good of himself, or by his own inherent power," and was at first shocked by the affirmation, that man is only an organ receptive of all things of life.

"Why," I said, "That would make man a mere machine, to be played upon by every wind that blows.

"Only that He who made him has taken care of that and prevised and provided that nothing can affect him from without but what finds response from within, and so the harmony of his being is preserved, and he is the recipient of the Divine life in greater fullness, as he comes into the order for which he was created, to be an image and likeness of the Lord. To bring man into this order is the constant effort of the Divine Providence. In order that this may be affected, man must co-operate with the Lord, by resisting, as from himself the things that hinder."

"How can man do this, if he is only a machine and has no life in himself?" I asked.

"By using the faculties that have been placed within him, according to the instruction that has been laid within his reach; for man, though only an organism to receive life from the one Source or Fountain from which he is constantly nourished, is not a dead machine, but created of living substance, which is at first planted in dead things, or clothes itself with matter to give it form and fixedness. This is then cast off, and the man lives a spiritual being, or man in the spiritual world, as we now are.

It was then explained that the Word, called the Bible, in its letter is adapted to the natural plane of thought and of life; but that there is a spiritual sense within it adapted to the spiritual plane, as is the spiritual body adapted to the life in the spiritual world. All this filled me with wonder and I retired to my room to meditate.

I did not go to any lectures or classes for a few days, but tried to read the Bible in my room. The more I read and pondered, the clearer it became to my mind that there was need for an interpretation different from any I had heard; and I began to see more reason in what I had listened to in my last lesson; therefore concluded to go again, and found the subject under contemplation was the answer to my thought—Why the Word in its literal or natural sense cannot refer to the things of the plane of nature:

1. Because it is addressed to the spiritual man, or man as a spiritual being.

2. It is given to conjoin earth to heaven, so that spiritual light and love may through heaven descend from the Lord and vivify the souls of men on earth; therefore

it must have a sense adapted to the perception of angels of each heaven and to men upon earth.

Reference was then made to our experiences upon awakening into this world and after, to show that on the plane of the spiritual life the Word is literally fulfilled as it could not be, nor was ever intended to be, on the natural plane. So gently is the teaching adapted to our states.

From this time I was more willing to be taught new truths, but found a great stumbling-block when it was announced that all these things had been revealed to men on earth in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, of whom I had heard, but considered a heretic or teacher of absurdities, though I knew but little about the books. It was then that I was about to leave the school and your husband came to me. Before he left, I was convinced that the books were all that was claimed for them and that I was much at fault for blindly rejecting what would have prepared me for entering upon a happy and useful life, instead of having much to unlearn and then begin as a novice to learn what should be clear to rational thought and belief.

MISTAKEN VIEWS.

It may be useful to go over in detail some of these lessons. And first, in reference to the Divine Being, the Creator and Sustainer of all things. It was evident that my conceptions had been wholly natural, absurdly so; and it required much training to have them lifted out of that plane. All the theology I had heard tended to confirm me in it, as, that God had out of His mere good pleasure ordained certain conditions and affixed to them results or consequences and called them laws.

Also that His laws required certain external forms of worship and the acceptance of conditions, like those imposed by human governments to preserve external order, such as blind obedience and respect for an authority that is feared, with no hope of anything better than to escape punishment and gain rewards which would compensate for the suffering and the effort to receive favor. This is rather an extreme statement, but only a logical inference from premises formulated in much of the teaching called Christian. I say, "called Christian;" for it is far from that of the Gospel of Christianity.

THE DIGNITY OF SERVICE.

Another thing that made a great impression upon me was the regard (I should have said *honor*) that is given to the humblest service, no difference how menial it seemed, if it contributed to the comfort and well-being of the community or the individual. The willingness with which even the wisest and those best fitted to lead and govern would take the work that is least inviting; in other words, make themselves servants to all, astonished me.

The subject about which I would like to speak next is one that is little understood in the church to which I belonged, that of *regeneration*, without which it is known no one can see the kingdom of God. Many make a great and fatal mistake as to what the kingdom of God is and so struggle against the building of that kingdom in their hearts—a kingdom of service; the desire to serve others, not to be served; to be of use, not to be ministered to; a disposition to ask where and how I can give, not how I can get. When this view fully burst upon my vision, I ex-

claimed, "Woe is me! I am undone! I am not fit for the kingdom of God. I must surely be cast out; for has not my thought of heaven been of the happiness it would bring to me; not a state where I could be of service to mankind. How few would desire it, if so presented, and yet it is so pictured by the Lord Himself; and, too, it is the only way to come into the joy and peace of heaven."

THE ORIGIN OF ALL THINGS.

Another lesson and one that was not easy to learn was that each and every thing in the universe is originally from one substance. Just as in the natural world the sun is the source and origin of the earth and all things that grow upon it, and all that is concealed within it; so the Divine is the source and substance of all things in the spiritual world and in the natural by derivation from that. Thus it is that there is unity and order in everything of the created universe, without which, indeed, nothing could subsist or exist. The grandeur of the conception is beyond description; and the more we can enter into it, the more deep is our adoration, the more profound our humility, the more established our state of peace and security, since we know that to the hosts of the rebellious has gone forth the fiat, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no farther."

One lesson of this kind brought me to see that the things wherein I had thought myself wise were mostly mistaken interpretations of the two great books of nature and revelation. Having once come to this state, my progress in understanding the real lessons in both has been less slow and difficult; my light (the light about me) has grown brighter and I am permitted, rather, I have "

ability and inclination, to go abroad and see more of how these principles taught in the school are demonstrated in the lives of people who have lately come and of those who have been here longer; and with this has grown strong the desire to help those in need of any help I can give.

I was soon brought to realize my unfitness for the society and employments of the angels and that I could not be transformed by any miraculous change, but must by my own efforts, co-operating with the Divine, choose and follow the laws of the Divine order by resisting in myself whatever was opposed to the law that reigns in heaven, that the love of others should take precedence of the love of self and the Lord's will should be the rule in every act of life. . . .

PROGRESS SLOW BUT ENCOURAGING.

I would like to tell you further that I have had a delightful visit with Mr. — and his society, though I could not enter fully into the sphere of their wisdom. I have come into a state where the interior or spiritual sense of the Word is delightful, even when I do not comprehend what others see in it. This has been a very gradual growth and I am led to exclaim, "Oh, the depth of both the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord! How unsearchable is His wisdom!"

I have a very pleasant home, and am alternating study and recreation, that is, mingling with others in various ways, conversation, music, games, short excursions; and occasionally I am called upon to assist some one whose needs my own experiences have enabled me to understand. I am assured that my field of usefulness will be enlarged

as I am able to enter more fully into the sphere of loving sympathy in which angelic men dwell and from which is their delight.

I will not take more of your time now, but hope what I have said may induce some to set a higher value on the knowledge of spiritual things and to cultivate a love for mankind, one and all, because of the unity of the race and their common origin as children of one Father.

TWO MONTHS LATER.

I want to tell you that I am still in the intermediate world, because the state and thought in heaven, where I hope to have my final home are so very different from what I had contracted in the world, that it takes great patience and struggle to change to a state exactly opposite; and yet I desire to make, or rather, to have the change made in me; for I can do nothing of my own effort. It is all given, as I can be brought out of a state of resistance to the new way, which state is so confirmed by long habit. The old ways of thought and feeling keep coming back, but lose something of strength by being resisted; so we have hope of final deliverance and are kept from despair.

I wish only to add to the above that my progress has been more rapid since the last was written, and much of my time is now employed in relieving and rescuing men from thralldom to evil habits and the consequences that follow. Many I had known in the natural world need such help and receive it more readily from one of their own acquaintance and neighborhood. Some who had been in prison

have found were not so bad as I had thought and are more ready to take advice from their experiences there.

I am going home soon to be with the wife of my youth and of my love, who had so long preceded me into this world, where the tender mercies of our God are so wonderfully displayed.

Question—Can you speak to me from that blessed home?

Yes, indeed, if there is occasion; but it is more difficult to describe in the language of earth what is so far above the range of natural thought and natural imagery, unless one has an insight into the deeper things concealed within appearances on the surface.

Adieu for the present, and God be with you.

Our friend has not perished,
For him still goes on
The life that we cherished
In a fullness unknown
In this world of dull senses.

—Annie E. Bassett.

CHAPTER IX.

ANGELIC WISDOM CONCERNING ORDERLY AND DISORDERLY COMMUNICATIONS.

A person known to the "narrator," because of great financial and legal embarrassments desired advice from his brother in the spiritual world who had been a lawyer in this world. Therefore he sought to have communication by means of a mechanical device often used for amusement. His call was answered by a cunning spirit (as he learned later) who personated his brother so artfully that he was at the time entirely deceived.

The following explanation was given by an angel friend when inquiry was made by the narrator.—(Editor).

AN ANGEL EXPLAINS.

"The danger is for one who has not come into interior temptation by which alone comes liberation from the infestations of evil spirits that hover around the earth and take advantage of every opening to communicate with mankind. Evil spirits can read from any one's memory, as from an open book, whatever has been thought, or heard by that person, and draw their own conclusions, that are artfully presented in a way to confuse and bewilder. The whole of spiritualistic mediumship is based on this fact, and it is because of this, that warning is given by Swedenborg in the writings against "seeking" communication with spirits. It has been explained why this opening was given to the "Narrator," and that with it, comes great responsibility. She had been brought through great trials to feel, that what comes to us on the natural plane, is of little importance, only, as it affects our spiritual relations to the Lord and heaven.

Angels are not concerned about the external environ-

ments of any one, except so far, as the spiritual state is affected or influenced by it. They are pleased that men should be happy and free from care, if their happiness is based on their being in harmony with Divine order. But if not, it is better that there should be unrest and distress, rather than one should be satisfied to remain in a disorderly relation, for by this means man is brought to see that he is not rightly adjusted, so as to do and receive the best of which he is capable.

"There are constant cries to heaven for relief from natural distress, but these are answered so as to serve spiritual uses. The Lord does not permit any natural evil that cannot be made to serve the spiritual uses that are ever guarded, and He guides every one by His providence, so as to insure the greatest good that can come to him as a child of God, born to live in heaven, where all things are provided and minister to his happiness in proportion to his acknowledgment that they are from the Lord, and not because he deserves, or has earned them by his own skill. To bring man into this acknowledgment, he is sometimes permitted to act contrary to his usual prudence, and to involve himself in troubles from which human skill cannot release him. And so we are brought to see that we cannot lead ourselves, but must look to the Lord for guidance."

THE ANGEL IS AGAIN INTERVIEWED.

Question—How does the narrator of these messages differ from many professional mediums?

The angel replied.—The narrator is not a medium any

more than you are a medium when you receive the thoughts of other minds rationally and express them in the words of the speaker to some one else.

Question—I want to know whether the narrator's belief and thought have affected the character of what has been given to us?

She has not given color to my thought any more than you give color to the thoughts of an author whom you quote, but she is able to grasp my thoughts, or she could not receive and transmit them to you. I cannot make the subject altogether clear to your mind, because you cannot grasp what is implied in being with angels and being consciously in the natural world. It is not a common experience, and yet it is somewhat common for men to appear in the spiritual world among their like, and to be conscious of the presence of spirits with them in the natural world, both with the good and the evil.

All men are spirits and are conjoined with some one society in the spiritual world. My own experiences would not be sufficient to establish this fact; they can only confirm the general statement. The truth that this appears illusory to the natural world also applies to the spiritual world. There are with men, angels and spirits, but neither is conscious of their being together; but there are *exceptions* to this general law. It is not uncommon for men to appear in the world of spirits and in heaven, when their interior thought connects with angelic thought. The guardian angels are sometimes conscious of being with men and often it is by their sphere alone that men and children are protected from evil of every kind. The Lord is present Himself and uses angels to guard those given to the:

much as He uses any one in the natural world to help others by bringing their power of protection into effect in some way suited to the conditions of the case. I would be glad if, no matter how feebly, I could show you that every one is a guardian angel to some one else.

Question—How did you know about our children?

My love for you has directed my thought to your children, as your love to your sister makes you interested in her children. I have conscious perception of the state of life that one is in. That makes my effort intelligent, and with many effective of good to them. In this way are angels ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation.

I wish now to try to make you see that every one approaches another for some purpose, either good or evil. Men are but spirits clothed with bodies, and a man approaches another when he has some purpose in his heart. The meeting of bodies is not considered any meeting on this plane of thought. The attraction that draws men together is always that of like spheres about each. If you want to be deceived, you can get wicked spirits to tell you almost anything. If you have no definite purpose in calling, you will attract idlers who have no definite purpose in life. If you want amusement, you will attract those who give themselves solely to making fun out of your mistaken ideas about the Spiritual World. If you want *truth*, and are in earnest in regard to it, and approach this world with that in your thought, as the one thing to be sought after, you will, if conditions are provided, receive answers of *truth*. The conditions will depend upon whether you have vital connection with the Author of truth.

I am not advising any one to attempt to open the door that separates the spiritual world from the natural. It is attended with peril to all who seek it. But to some it is normal and orderly, as in a case where it comes unsought, and the call is from the spiritual side. This was the case with the narrator of these messages and she has not used her invitation to gratify a vain curiosity, nor to attempt to intrude into the secrets of other lives. Therefore the door is open to her and she is invited to converse freely with friends she may desire to speak with.

Question—Is communication between the two worlds the normal condition, or the order into which man was created?

Yes, or communication would not be forbidden in a disorderly state. I will say positively that all my life in the natural world I was conscious at times of my connection with heaven. I was not instructed as to my relation with heavenly societies, but felt that I was not alone when absent from home and friends. I was sometimes with Brother Elisha and sometimes with others I had known.

I will say, too, positively that my sister and friend who receives my words, is not a mistaken judge as to the presence of her brothers and husband and others with whom she converses as friend with friend may lawfully do, but that like as angels are sent on errands of mercy, so has she been sent to bring heavenly information to those who are ignorant and blind to the spiritual world.

It is not a common experience that men on earth can receive messages from heaven or the intermediate world which is between heaven and earth.

It is not the orderly way that mankind should t

structed in the truths that lead to spiritual life. But there have been in all dispensations those who did not respond to orderly leading; and the Lord's mercy is not limited to man's finite conception of what is true order.

It is acknowledged in the church that before man had departed from the integrity in which the men of the most Ancient Church were inwardly principled, there was open communication between the natural and spiritual world.

This communication was closed (as is known in the church) because man inclined to the love of his selfhood rather than to be led by the Lord. When this became the settled condition of the race, it was not possible for men to be instructed in the same way they were before. This made it necessary for the Lord to provide a written revelation. This was in accommodation to the change in man, not in the Lord's attitude toward man.

Infinite Love manifests itself in an infinite variety of ways. No limit can be assigned to His wisdom in finding ways by which to rescue His wandering sheep from the perils into which they plunge in the vain effort to live without God.

I know the Christian churches have limited the Lord's operations within very narrow bounds, and into the short period of man's life in the natural world. After this, it is supposed that Love no longer rules the universe, but strict justice sits on the throne and metes out punishment to all transgressors.

This is not the teaching of the church of the New Jerusalem in heaven or in earth, I am happy to say.

I need not go back to the origin of the race to prove that angels and men were designed to live in mutual help-

fulness, that is clearly stated in the writings for the church of the New Jerusalem in several places, and whoever desires can find the same truth taught in the Word. For example, "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." "There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth." If there were no sameness between heaven and earth, there could not be helpfulness on one side, nor sorrow when the ministries fail of their purpose; which is implied in the joy that follows success.

Communication between the natural and spiritual worlds will become more common as the church on earth comes more in harmony with the church in the heavens. It will vary as the needs of men are varied.

There are different openings from the different degrees or planes of the mind, and one is instructed on the highest plane to which his interiors have been opened.

If only natural things are regarded, there is consociation with corporeal spirits in the intermediate world. But where this is the case there is no conscious intromission or relation. The spirits of this class would be glad to go back to earth where they could enjoy corporeal pleasures; but they are gradually interested in more internal employments and instructed in details of some use that best suits their inclination. They are not permitted to converse with men or know they are with men.

The next grade of spirits consists of those who in the world were given to the study of the arts and sciences without any recognition of spiritual truth or thought of the Divine Being as the Author of all learning. These are more natural, but not so gross as the former; they do not so much desire to obsess men in the natural world.

The angels only desire man's good, not to control either his actions or his thoughts. They are ever in the effort to lead him by instilling good affections, knowing that he will find corresponding truth. The Lord has given truth in many degrees and forms, and He alone gives each one truth to correspond to his affection.

Question—Should what comes from friends in the spiritual world be accepted as the Lord speaking?

As to anything given by us being the same as the Lord speaking to man for his instruction and thus bearing with it the authority of Divine truth, that is a great mistake. I am your friend and brother; and as such give you the truth finited by my limited understanding.

The Lord who is infinite is nearer than any created being can be, being immediately present with, or in, the light and heat that vivify the external mind through the internal and inmost, where is His dwelling place in every one alike.

All good and all truth have their origin in Him, and take form according to reception.

Many have erred from thinking that what comes from the inner world must be absolute truth. This is far from being the case even in regard to some planes in the heavens. Some things are seen according to appearances and might be so reported.

All teaching is to be judged by its agreement with revealed truth as given in the spiritual sense of the Word. Where this is not well understood, it is better to lay it up before the Lord, and wait for more light; the Lord speaks directly to man only through His Word, and is Himself immediately present to give illumination and illustration as to its application. He said, I am the Light of the world. He that followeth ME shall not walk in darkness.

It is faith in Him as living and present that gives rest and peace to the soul.

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Voices from the Open Door

VOLUME ONE

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CHAPTER X.

"If ye KNOW these things happy are ye if ye DO them."
—John XIII, 17.

Introductory Remarks.

A series of short morning talks with a friend who had a few weeks before passed from the earth life.*

After some words of personal greeting and expressions of surprise and pleasure at finding an open door between the two planes of life, which were not recorded, came the following:

I am delighted to meet the friends I knew in the natural world. It is a constant surprise that I am so little changed and find this world so much like the one I left; only as I see more into the heart of things, I can perceive how everything without is an expression of things internal, and these again of things still more interior in a series.

The relation, too, of the external to the internal is much more evident as one penetrates into the causes of things, and that has always been a delight to me.

*This friend was a preacher and author in the natural world.

I can see that in the church on earth there must be this orderly progression from internal to external and the imposing of external bonds hinders rather than helps in this process. I am constantly surprised, too, that I did not see this more clearly before; but the shadows and clouds that encompass the earth are very dense and dark. It will be my delight and the effort of my life to cooperate with the church on earth in all efforts to establish the church on the same basis that I see in operation here. The channels of communication are not many at present, but in every society there is one or more who reads the Word and the Writings regularly and devoutly, and through these Heaven can and does flow down to enlighten others; and the number is increasing.

I wish to say that each day I see more clearly the need there is—(and the same law is in force with man on the earth and those who have laid aside the corporal part, for the bodies we have here respond much more readily, and are in every way more subservient to the uses of the soul)—as I began to say, I see more clearly the need there is, absolutely in compelling the external and making it obsequious to what the internal or spirit sees to be the true order in which a spiritual man should live. If you begin to parley with the serpent he will outwit you ten to one; for “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

There is no use in bemoaning the past, but when a man looks himself square in the face in the light of Heaven, he feels how great is the mercy of the Lord.

Experiences of a Sabbath Day.

I will give the experiences of the fourth Sabbath I have

spent since my conscious awakening in this wonderful world.

I was awakened by hearing singing. It seemed immediately over my head, the voices of many persons blending into, as it were, one strain of melody. Looking out of a window into the east, I saw a choir of men and women who sang with upturned faces the hymn beginning: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." As I joined in the familiar words I was conscious of a strange uplifting and at the same time humiliation of spirit. I dressed hastily, and seemed borne as if on wings to an elevated place from which appeared the most sublime scenery I had ever beheld. Tiers upon tiers of lofty hills covered with verdure of various hues, and over all the softest glimmering lights moved as in a panorama. I was moved to ecstasy and exclaimed, "Great and marvelous are Thy works." "Just and true are Thy ways, thou King of Saints." I remained in contemplation until summoned to prepare for the services of the day, which I was to spend with one of the same calling who had preceded me by several years into the spirit world, and had entered into its activities with fervor and delight.

I was cordially welcomed and given a place close beside the elevation on which the speaker stood. The service was very simple, consisting of humiliation and acknowledgment of unmerited favors; songs of praise in which all joined following the tones of an instrument that only led and did not drown the voices; the reading of the Word in its spiritual sense, and a discourse giving illustration and application of the same. In the front of the audience chamber was the depository for the Word, from which wher

opened went forth rays of golden light that extended up and around to a considerable distance. The minister was clothed in white while he officiated, without color or ornament; about his head a halo or crown with stars, as it were, moving, signifying intelligence. These are seen by the audience as they are able to apprehend the meaning of what is said, and do not compel assent from those who do not see deeply into the essence of things. * * * *

Each day brings new experiences to every one, everywhere, but to me in this world of wondrous and constantly changing phenomena, it is simply marvelous how rapid and unceasing the variety that bursts upon the eye, how incessant the movements that picture visibly the changing states of men and women who are being initiated into the meaning of things and the mysteries of their own being. As a new thought is apprehended a picture corresponding to that in the mind appears in clear or dim light as the truth is clearly or dimly seen in the mind, and extends itself more nearly or remotely according to its relation to other truths, general truths, or rather the conception of them, having the widest extension.

I am again with Mr. ——— and the friends among whom is my home for the present. It is a pleasant coincidence that there are several here who by me were introduced into connection with the organized church on earth, who have introduced me to the fellowship of congenial associates, and into the ways by which I am to find my own proper place and field of labor, when I am ready for it.

The farther I get, the more I see there is for me to learn, and the need there is of a change of attitude in regard to some things that I regarded of minor importance,

and others upon which I was inclined to lay great stress. However, I will come to this later. Just now I am trying to take in the general trend of things as I see them worked out. * * * *

I am not so much inclined to talk as usual. Somehow, I am overawed at the contemplation of the vastness of the operation of laws that appear so unimportant to men on the natural plane, but here they serve to instruct by corresponding things on this plane, and so mean according to the use made of them, either that man is more than a beast or less, according to the domination of superior or inferior qualities. In some ways we were more like worms than men, crawling on the earth and pushing each other, as if there was no overruling power, but each had to make room for himself by crowding out somebody else. We grabbed at what was before us of wealth or opportunity, as if everything depended upon our effort and our haste. What a contrast here! There is ceaseless activity, but no haste amounting to hurry. There is no anxiety lest another should get in ahead of one.

"The Greatest of These Is Charity."

I have several things on my mind. The first is that the sun shines with peculiar brilliancy when the subject of charity is discussed, and not so brightly when the themes relating to philosophy and metaphysics are under consideration. Then again when the discourse relates to form and ritual, the angels ask, "To what purpose are the energies of the church given to these?" "Is not the Lord's dwelling place in human hearts?" If men's burdens are lightened and their minds illuminated by the light of truth so that they can offer unto the Lord a true sacrifice of

thanksgiving and praise, is it not more acceptable than the sound of many instruments and all the formalities of ritualistic worship?" These things may delight the external man, but the truly spiritual man is only refreshed and finds his satisfaction in the ministration of love and truth to the famishing and world-weary multitude who know not their own wants. How to reach these is their constant study and effort.

Humiliation of spirit is our proper attitude to receive anything of spiritual good. This can only come from seeing ourselves in our true relation as recipients of the Divine bounty. Before we can thus see ourselves, there must of necessity be some trying experiences, such as serve to reduce the corporeal and external man to obedience to the dictates of the rational. Then the work is only begun, and each step is attended with more and more of struggle and conflict, until it seems, as the process goes on, as if it could only end by annihilation; and the soul almost desires that it might cease to live rather than to keep up the struggle longer. When this state of things comes in connection with external adversity, sickness, poverty or bereavement, the case becomes desperate, and only by Divine intervention can relief be afforded. And yet into such straits must every soul, born into our earth with its perverted heredity, be reduced in order that it be liberated from the thralldom to the sense life. It is only after one has passed through, not while he is in the valley, that he can say: "Happy is the man that endureth temptation."

A Social Center.

We will go back a little and describe the dwellings of the community where my place of abode has been. We do

not think or speak of being at home, or in our homes while in the Intermediate world. It is only a stopping place where things extraneous to the real man, are, as it were, loosened and sloughed off. And yet there is much to delight one, very much; and those who have been here longer and are engaged in uses of various kinds, have much of heavenly happiness and comfort.

The central building is on an elevation, and is composed of several apartments which are used for places of meeting for various purposes. The one on the east is for worship, and is adorned with gold and precious stones in great abundance. Next to this is the place of instruction—separated and connected by corridors—instruction in various departments of knowledge, all bearing relation to the internal sense of the Word, for those preparing to become instructors in spiritual things, and for others who assist in various ways.

There are also libraries, not one, but many, for books treating of various subjects—yes, and magazines and reading rooms, places for social meetings, and for recreations of many kinds. These have in them musical instruments, platforms for speaking and for different kinds of representatives illustrating various scenes and phases of life, but nothing that is not proper and elevating.

Those who were engaged in such avocations in the natural world for the sake of good uses, still take pleasure in such things, and in the arts of embellishment and illustration.

The places for gymnasiums and out-of-door sports are not in the center, but in the circumference of the community.

About this central building and the grounds encircling

it, of which I should say something, are the abodes of all who for greater or lesser time find the greatest attraction in this community, as workers or as students.

In this ground are many beautiful trees and arbors with seats, delightful places for resting.

Another thing I want to say in regard to the buildings is, that though these buildings are very symmetrical and beautiful there is no unnecessary ornamentation, but everything is for some use.

I will add that use being ever kept first in design and execution the result is most gratifying in every particular. It is the same in the homes which represent both the wants and the internal state of order and development of each occupant.

I would like now to turn to more interior things and the social life of the community. This is communistic in the sense of all public utilities being provided by the all bountiful Father, and no one claiming precedence in their use, or trying to accumulate for himself more than present needs require.

Each individual life is distinct from all others, and care is taken that no one's freedom shall be in the least hindered, but each one has opportunity to live his own life untrammelled by others, to follow out his own ideals, and himself correct, as he becomes conscious of defects, without even a suggestion on the part of another. Thus life is most free and blessed; and this is made possible because every one desires and seeks the happiness of others more than his own.

I will now turn to another phase of the life here, the conscious presence of the Lord. It is said in the Writings

as an explanation of the Word, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved;" the angels see the Sun of Heaven always before their faces at an angle of 45 degrees, each one according to his state of love. This same law obtains here, but not so perfectly as in the higher realms.

With most of us, clouds obscure, and at times shut out the light, and I, speaking from my own experience, am left for a time in comparative darkness, when thoughts of the earth life press their presence and claim recognition; though at first a sense of freedom from its limitations as something I had done with, gave great buoyancy and delight.

As we have been taught, all states through which we have passed on the earth plane, return, and I am beginning to realize this, though, as I said before, at the first I seemed to have left it all behind. Still I can see the usefulness, and I might say, the necessity that all things that have made any part of our internal life, and even those that have been adjoined, should come up to be reviewed in the undimmed light and each given its proper place in relation to the whole. Whatever of humiliation may be required, a true man will not shrink from facing his past and accepting willingly the correction necessary to bring him into a state of order where he may do what can be done to make amends.

This is the work upon which I am about to enter, and it may be a more serious one than I know. But I will not shrink, and will leave the outcome to Him whose tender mercies are over all His works.

Three Months Later Relates Heart Searching Experiences.

I wish in the first place to say that I am again with the friends among whom I was staying when these conversations began. I have been absent from them about two months of your time and have passed through heart searching experiences. It is not useful to go into the details of these experiences, but only to say, that there are no useless exposures of the secrets of any life. Every one is left alone to review and confront his past in the new light that he has received. If he is willing to bring his life into this light and to amend according to the laws of order, he is shielded and guided according to his willingness to acknowledge that all good is from the Lord.

I was led to a place where were gathered people of every class and sort, and told to select from this mixed multitude a company with whom I could associate for mutual improvement and the delights of social life.

In these associations, all the states of my past life returned with endless variety. Also with these were given perceptions to discriminate as to what was useful in furthering the main purpose, that of preparing a foundation and then developing the spiritual faculties; and thus what was from the Lord and what by His permission was allowed, that the opposite might be brought out and rejected as sins against Him.

At many steps in this unfolding of my past, was I led to exclaim, "Oh, the depth both of the wisdom and goodness of the Lord!" "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" I was led to see how various had been the influences that had aroused my hereditary tendencies, how these had been tempered by the

outward environment and made to serve the great purpose of withholding my reason from being blinded by evil inclinations in the natural will, until something of conscience could be formed by the acknowledgment of truth and the way made for the forming of a new will that might find delight in obedience to the law of the Lord, which is none other than the law of loving others more than self.

There were many transactions that called for humiliation and acknowledgment of mistake and error. This acknowledgment I was in most cases willing to make when the light of higher states showed their obliquity. There were other things that had taken deep root in the affections of the natural mind, that were not so easily gotten rid of, and there was struggle and conflicting states of light and darkness, experiences that laid bare the inmost motives. The love of ease, and the delights of the natural life stood out in sharp contrast with the love of giving and of denying the lower self for the sake of the higher; and of helping others to overcome this lower self.

There were other and deeper experiences than these, in which I stood as to my selfhood, face to face with the Infinite and Perfect Life and was led to exclaim, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." These were not merely fleeting impressions, they were real experiences, the influence of which wrought a change of attitude in me toward the Lord, and toward every living soul that He has made. I no longer desire place and position of honor, but only to be of service in the way of His appointment, whose displays of wisdom and goodness exceed all comprehension.

After these experiences were past, I saw before me a path that led me again among my brethren and fr-

where is my home while I study still further the wonderful revealings of the Divine leading.

Reflections Suggested by a New Year.

A new year has begun on earth. This means, as viewed on the spiritual plane, a new state of life or a new beginning. Even on earth there is a perception of this, from a custom that was more general some years ago than now, though it still has followers, of reviewing the past and forming resolutions for amendment, where errors were acknowledged. It is a good custom, when made in humility of spirit and reliance on Divine help.

What I have in mind, is some means, not so much to awaken interest, as to produce conviction that spiritual things are the only realities. It has been much in my thought and the subject of conversation in our assemblies.

I have been thinking, that no outward message can affect people who are not prepared to understand and be guided by it. Therefore, the Lord in His wise providence withholds His messages until the minds of men are by various means made receptive. The eagerness of ambition and desire of possession are tempered sometimes or in some, by satiety, by finding that attainment does not yield the satisfaction and happiness that was expected; that the hunger of the soul is rather intensified than appeased by the possession of what was so eagerly sought. In others more prone to idolatry, the removal of possessions and power, or bereavement of friends, and bodily affliction serve as means to soften the heart, or make the natural man's inclinations yield and cause reflection and submission. Then is the time when some seed of truth may find lodgment and take root.

There seems not much more to be said on that subject. We can only do the work given us and wait the developments of Divine Providence, both for ourselves and others. If we should undertake to hurry things in either our own behalf or that of others, we should only get both into trouble. Another subject I had in mind when I began speaking is the difficulties we place in the way of our own happiness by forecasting the future, even for a day. That the Lord leads every one, is often on the lips of the men of the church, but that He has prevised and provided for every possible contingency that may arise; that it is our part to attend to the duty now in hand and not look beyond, because the Lord is present with us to enlighten and instruct when the next comes, is what needs to be impressed deeply on our hearts; for by this alone can we come into a state of genuine peace and rest and also be enabled to do effective service in the way of the Lord's leading.

Following on in the same line of thought, I wish to say that all anxiety of whatever kind, either for ourselves or for others, is a real, inward denial of this great truth, for anxiety of any sort has in it the denial or at least doubt that everything is ordered for the best; that either wisdom or power or goodness, prescience or omnipresence is wanting, or every minutest ordering is the best that could be, or in other words is perfect. We all admit that the seeming on the earth side is quite the contrary oftentimes; and yet if this were not true, the whole universe would fall into chaos.

When and Why the Young Go Hence.

I am glad that I can learn from your side that a young man I knew and was fond of in many ways, '

brought into this world. Would that I could in some way give to the sorrowing parents a glimpse of what this means to one not confirmed in evil loves; how the faculties unfold in a way undreamed of in that world where material things have such a hold on the affections and from this cause occupy so large a place in the thoughts, especially of those occupied in making their start, and so, a place in the business of the world. As they go on, this love naturally grows until the person—man or woman—becomes so swallowed up and conjoined with those of like character whose tendency is to hell, that it is only by great effort and suffering on his part that he can ever be liberated. When brought into this world before this state has become fixed, it is as though one had been awakened from a state of hallucination and placed in conditions where he can see things in their true relation, and so in freedom be guided to right choices. This is the reason why so many who are regarded as promising and superior young people are called here in early manhood and womanhood. The intensity of their nature, wherein lies their promise of success, is the basis or reason of the danger to which they are exposed in the present state of things. Therefore there is great cause for rejoicing when such are by the good Providence of the Lord transferred into the spiritual world.

The Lord, who ever regards eternal life as the end and aim for which every one is created, so orders His Providence as to secure this without regard to interests that are, from the very nature of things, purely transitory. He alone knows when there is danger of this end being defeated by entanglements of the affections and interests in material things that were not meant to satisfy.

Faith in this all-wise and loving Father and in the orderings of His Providence is the only balm for sorely wounded hearts.

I used to think suffering of all kinds was to be avoided as an evil, but now I see it is only permitted to save from what is really evil, an absorbing selfishness that counts ease and comfort to ones self as the final end to be attained. We are born into this, and it takes much training and hard discipline before we are divested of the impression. . . . Not that suffering of any kind is to be sought for its own sake nor for the good it may bring, as this would defeat its purpose and induce a self-righteousness or claim of merit, but suffering that comes while we have before us the purpose and effort to come into harmony with the Divine order and ideal life has a different effect, even if it brings states of despair.

The Providence that seems so severe is one of the ways the Heavenly Father leads His children out of their thrall-dom to the life of appearances, the life of the senses and, as it were, compels them to let go their hold on material things that perish with their using, that He may thereby direct their thought and so train their affections to lay hold on the real substance of things. The real is the enduring and the satisfying.

That One substance presents itself in myriad forms so as to find recognition and so reciprocation on the part of sentient beings, created from this substance, for this very purpose, that through this recognition and reciprocation, He, the Maker and Bestower of all things, may find conjunction with His creation. Oh! how wonderful are His works and His dealings with men. When we reflect

these things, how strange it seems that doubt or rebellion should find a place in sane human beings.

Review of the Year.

It is more than a year of your time since I was first permitted to speak to your inner ear from the realm of causes. You cannot understand even a fraction of what this means to one trained to thinking about spiritual and heavenly things, even when he has much to repent of in his failure to ultimate these principles in his daily life. This can never cease to be a source for humiliation and regret as often as they are brought to mind, and let me here, once for all assure every one who may read these lines, that any failure to live up to his very highest conceptions in every relation in life, will not fail to bring exposure to each thought and intent and act and corresponding humiliation and contrition, if the person is in a state to be amended, and at length elevated where these things will no longer darken his path and becloud his vision, and where he will be permitted to make reparation for every wrong he has done. For such is the provision and prevision of the Lord's Providence, otherwise many things would fail of their purpose and this Providence would not be perfect, as it is, in bringing into a harmonious whole the scattered fragments.

I am happy to tell you that having passed through these humiliating experiences, the result of my own misdoing, in which time I was much alone and sometimes on the brink of despair, by the great mercy of the Lord I have been delivered out of them and given a place and work, where, in the service of helping others, I am freed from the shadows cast by past errors and sins, free to explore the rich treasures unfolded in the marvelous workings of the Divine

Providence in rescuing and saving men, even those whose humanity seemed crushed and ruined by a long series of mis-used opportunities, which resulted in faculties dwarfed, distorted, mangled.

There is a uniform tendency of all things in Heaven and earth to a perfect form of its kind—the struggle, if I may so call it, to overcome impediments and obstacles, to in some way make up—if it is only by suggestion—the completed form of the ideal. You see it in the maimed body of man or animal—in the stunted plant and dwarfed tree; and so in man as a spiritual being, made in the image, or made to be an image of the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Creator.

The Awakening.

Before proceeding further with my narration, for illustration of some statements in preceding pages in regard to the close relation between the life on earth and the first stages of life in the spiritual world, I will relate some of my own experiences. This change was not expected on my part. I had some feeling of weariness, and was planning to rest for a time, hoping to enter with renewed vigor into the various fields of usefulness that opened before me, in each and all of which I felt great interest; and the hope of seeing good results from plans maturing, gave courage and delight as I looked into the future. There was a short period of suffering, then an unconsciousness from which I awoke as from a deep and restful sleep. This awakening was gradual and peaceful, with no thought of illness or death; only a consciousness of comfort and of abounding life that overcame all obstacles and enabled me to go forward in the path set before me.

When after a brief review of what had been my plans for the next day I looked about me, I saw approaching the couch or bed on which I found myself lying, a form and face, somewhat changed from that last seen, of a man with whom I had at one time been intimately acquainted, but who was known to have passed from the earth life a few years before, who now greeted me with a smile of recognition and glad welcome.

It took me but a moment to recognize the countenance, rather from the memory of our first acquaintance than that of later years.

He grasped my extended hand, and said, "It gives me great pleasure to be the first to greet and welcome you into what we used rightly to call 'The Better Land.' I know the change of worlds has come to you with little of warning on that side, but every preparation has been made to receive you. You will find your wants have been anticipated."

I was too much surprised to answer at once, but having collected my thoughts a little, I concluded that my spiritual eyes had been opened, and that I was in vision, or introduced into this world for some purpose, so said, "Brother, have you some message for me, and for the church?" He understood and answered, "It has been granted me the great privilege and pleasure to be the first to welcome you to what has rightly been called The Better Land." "But," I said, "I am only here for a moment, to receive some special message, for my work is very urgent and the demands are great." "Nevertheless," was answered, "It will have to fall into other hands, for you are in the spiritual world to return no more to the natural plane of life." "Since it is the Lord's doing, it must be best, for He makes

no mistakes." I lay for some time reflecting, while he sat near me waiting. One who had never been instructed could hardly have been more surprised.

At length I turned and asked, "What is expected of me here, what am I to do first?" "You can do nothing while you lie there in bed," was answered, "So when you feel ready—there is no haste—you will find water and clothing in the lavatory," pointing to a door near my bed. I will wait for you without. After he left I rose hastily, was refreshed by a plunge in the water, rather by a full bath, I did not need towels, and was soon dressed in clothing such as I had been accustomed to wearing. I then joined my friend outside, where the new world greeted eye and ear and nostrils. The freshness of morning was in the air, an odor as of violets in spring time floated on the breeze, the glory of a morning without clouds, yet softened by a hazy shimmering of light and shadow, betokened the rising sun which could not yet be seen; and soft melodies charmed the ear.

"What a delightful world!" I exclaimed after a pause, "Who would not rejoice to be in it,—if only my wife were here!" "Ah, dear," I sighed, "I fear this will be a trying time for you."

We walked for a short distance in silence, then coming to seats under an oak, he led the way and we sat down. I continued in contemplation and wonder at the sudden change that had brought me from my family and field of labor without warning. I was too much bewildered to get a clear idea of what it might mean.

Gradually my perceptions cleared, and turning to my friend, who seemed in deep thought, but attentive to my

every motion, I said, "This is indeed a great surprise and I am confused in my thought too much to form any clear conception as to the reason for this sudden change, that must mean so much to me and to those I have left." To this was replied, "I am not myself informed as to all that may be involved in this seemingly abrupt severing of earthly ties, though I have for some time had knowledge that a change was near, and that a check would be given to certain tendencies in the church on earth that are not in harmony with the laws of orderly growth."

"You will find things explained as you come into association with those on this side who have entered into the deeper things pertaining to the conduct of church organization and worship. For the present leave these questions to adjust themselves and come home with me where you will find refreshment and comfort by meeting many friends and enjoying the fellowship of those of like affection for truth."

I went willingly to his home where I was given apartments. A goodly number of his society whom I had known came to greet me, and said they were rejoiced at my coming, for now I would be more useful to the church on earth than I could have been had I remained. I wondered at this, but said nothing. Would that I could describe the changes in some of these former friends. You remember Mrs. —, how sort of unapproachable—now her face beamed with kindness and a gentle radiance was about her every movement. The setness of her features had given place to mobility of movement that expressed every change of feeling and she is really a handsome woman in the prime of life. Your friend, Mrs. —, is more lovely still than when you

last heard from her. For the time being personal considerations were lost sight of, and I gave my entire thought and feeling to the joyousness of this reunion.

A Surprise.

One of the greatest surprises that came to me after my introduction into the life of this wonderful world, was to find that I was not altogether cut off from the one I had left. Not that this is a common thing with those who come here; on the contrary, it is very unusual that intelligent, rational communication is given. At first I questioned and wondered about it, for the impression I had had, in common with the Church in general, was, that in the present condition of the world, all attempts from either side were on the part of spirits of the grosser sort assembled in the lower part of the world of spirits, and of men and women unbalanced in their minds, or who wanted to deceive others; but found that my judgment in this, as in many other matters, needed revising. As I said before, it is not common; and that it should exist at all is a proof of the amazing adaptation of Divine mercy to meet conditions where ordinary methods had failed.

That I have the privilege of sending this personal message to the inquiring and open minded to whom it may come, from my former standpoint, is as marvelous to me, as it will be to any who give it credence, if they, too, realize all that is involved in the acceptance of it as genuine.

And yet what could be more natural and to be expected, than that the ancient order in which man was created should be restored as soon as conditions in the church on earth shall make it possible, which is, that heaven and earth should be

together, those in Heaven knowing what is done on earth, and men on earth knowing what is done in Heaven. (A. C. 1880.)

That this must come very slowly is manifest, because there is so little real faith in the Lord as everywhere present in His Divine Love and Wisdom, and immediately present in every human soul and life. Of course this faith cannot be established in any heart, unless it has been led to seek him as the only good and this can only be through much of struggle and temptation combats, and these so severe that the many are not called to endure them.

But, now, since by the Divine mercy, a meeting-place has been provided, it must have been intended for use to the profit of the citizens on both planes; not to supplant any revelation that has before been given, but to confirm and exalt by giving illustration of how things here harmonize and explain what could never apply on the plane of nature.

The Continuity and Enlargement of Life.

When one comes into this plane of life suddenly and unexpectedly, as was my experience, the mind filled with plans for new activities and efforts, this state is not immediately changed; but rather opportunities are given for the exercise of all normal faculties, and indeed incentives to stimulate activities in many directions, that thereby the trend or underlying motive that has guided the life may be manifest, and what is not in harmony with this, if it has been formed from good intent, presents itself in such form as to be recognized and so corrected by the person himself, without apparent notice on the part of associates. Each one has an awakening and reception suited

to his own state and needs, and these are known to the Lord alone, so that no angel or good spirit, so much as asks that he may go here or there, do this or that, but waits in quietness of spirit for tokens or calls signifying that his services are in demand. Soon there came to me calls for services in the way of instructing others newly arrived from the Christian churches, whose intentions had been right and who had in the main, lived up to their opportunities; and I found, and now find great delight in helping such into the clear light as they are able to bear it, of the internal sense of the Holy Word. It is for want of this that they stumble and are in darkness. It takes patience and tact to adapt to their state what they may be able to bear. Oh if the Church on earth but realized the value it is to any human soul to have been instructed during the earth life in this one thing more than all else, that the Word treats of spiritual things, and of the laws of heavenly life, this would be much more the theme of sermons and the press, than discussions of abstract and metaphysical questions. To help people to prepare for this world; to rescue them from the errors that have come down from the darkened past, is a work worthy the evangel of the New Jerusalem. I want to say in this connection that I have in many cases been surprised at the ready reception by what would be called simple minded people, of interior truth, such as angels of the higher heavens delight in and with whom those who receive these truths are associated by this reception. As the writings distinctly teach, every one receives truth according to his love of good. The state of each one is soon manifested, though this may not be the best one is capable of being brought into. So the angels are never discouraged and do

not forsake any because of rebuffs, though they may withdraw their presence. They do not give up any in the bounds of their ministrations, and this because of their love for saving souls to accomplish which no effort is too great (as the writings also teach) ; and this from the Lord's love for saving the whole human race, for which purpose He assumed the Human and glorified it by means of temptation combats. It is this love that moves the whole heavens to action and endeavor to save the erring and the lost. Many of those in the Christian world who did not have the light of true doctrine to guide them, have felt and acted from this impulse of love and given themselves to the service of humanity. When such come here, they are the special objects of the love and care of angels, gentle and loving by whom they are instructed and ministered to in ways marvelous to behold. How presumptuous then is it for man to judge his brother man, since it is the Lord that leads each in the way that "Is best that could be," and the whole as a shepherd his flock. These reflections are often forced upon me as I come in contact with various peoples, or rather, with people in such great variety of intelligence and moral perception, and observe the care with which their spiritual life has been guarded in the midst of the most forbidding environments ; and I bow my head in adoration and wonder.

CHAPTER XI

TESTIMONY OF A LADY OF CULTURE AND REFINEMENT

When by a brief and peaceful sleep
We cross the mystic sea,
How sweet upon the other shore,
The awakening will be.

Then in the light of heaven's sun,
What truths will be revealed
Of life so longed-for, now begun,
Which earth had quite concealed.

Oh Rest! unspeakable and sweet!
Delightful change of air!
In which the breath of love is breathed
Around us everywhere.

LAVINIA W. CROSIER.

The greater part of my earthly life was spent in a growing city of what was called a Western State, though not far from the center of the country.

I had rather unusual advantages in home, school and church for the development and cultivation of my normal faculties, and was credited with having made a fair improvement of my opportunities. After reaching maturity, my ambition was to be and to do, rather than to have.

It would not be useful to go into the details of experiences in difficulties met and trials to the natural affections so severe as to make life for years one long struggle to conceal heart aches, that I might share and lessen the burdens of others that were more obvious and complicated than my own, and to all appearances harder to bear.

I lived in that world to what is regarded as a little past middle life and was brought unexpectedly away, with many plans and hopes for higher attainments by which I might be more useful, only partially defined and entered upon.

I have been well instructed as to the nature and laws of the spiritual world; that is, as well as the differences between the two planes of life can be pictured and made real to those on the lower; and yet many surprises awaited me on this higher or more interior plane. The nature of these surprises it is not easy to portray; but it is attempted for the purpose, or in the hope, that some conception may be formed in minds unused to thinking about the spiritual world being a real world, and the spiritual life a truly natural and normal human life, with all the faculties alert and waiting the call of the environment to come into active use, and the effort to image forth all the impulses that are stirred within.

To make this clear to the mind,—reflect upon the experiences of waking from deep sleep. The eyes instinctively open; the ear is attentive to catch any sound that may help the consciousness to connect the past and present and the internal longings with the external response.

Life goes right on, with as little apparent change, at first, as though while we slept there had been something added or changed in the room, and yet not enough to give a feeling of strangeness or alarm. The waking is as gentle as when one's consciousness returns when quiet is all around. We seem ourselves to be just the same as when we can last remember,—only there is a sense of freedom from what may have caused distress or anxiety. There is light

to greet the eye. Soft sounds assure one of life within and around.

When fully awake to the fact that I was no longer in the earthly body, but was indeed in the world where lived most of my nearest kindred and many loved as friends, there came over me a strong desire to see verified in them, all I had been taught and had hoped to find true; except that in the case of some, there was a feeling of anxiety lest through neglect or unbelief they had deprived themselves of the ability to enter into the life and enjoyments of the heavenly world, and must remain blind and indifferent as they had seemed toward spiritual and heavenly truths.

I am happy to tell you that much of this indifference was not aversion, but was more apparent than real, and that underneath this seeming apathy there was a real longing to find God as He is, and as He at some time reveals Himself to any and all who can be made sensible of their need of Him. This revealing comes to some in one way, and again in quite a different form; to some as a still, small voice; to others in visions of brightness that dazzle; but always in such a way as to answer the inmost desires of the heart and quiet all fear.

As the sun of heaven He gives light and warmth to all who turn to Him. As the moon, with radiance dimmed, this sun gives light and needed warmth to such as cannot bear the brilliancy of the sun. This light (or the Lord's appearing) came to me like the dawn of a new and beautiful day. The light became hazy and obscured when thoughts of the earth life and its associations returned and filled the horizon of the mind; but the clouds were dissipated when I turned to the Word as its truths are revealed in the internal sense,

and the sun of heaven shone before my enraptured sight with all the brightness I could bear. Thus was I convinced and confirmed in what I had believed and hoped in my youth, and, indeed, the greater part of my earth life; only the reality far exceeded any conception formed. The sweetness of the peace and joy are inexpressible.

Experiences of this kind are possible, and, I am told, not uncommon with some during life on earth. These only confirm what is taught about the Lord's presence being universal, and that man is not changed by the death of the body.

I had enjoyed some foretaste of heavenly peace and joy during my life on earth, when, forgetful of self-interest, I had sought and loved truth for its own sake,—for the sake of the good of life to which it led and showed the way; and when I gave my energies to the building up of the Lord's kingdom on the earth.

It is for the purpose of furthering the interests of that kingdom that a door of communication has been opened, and we who have entered what is to you the unseen realm, the inner chamber of the Father's House, gladly use the opportunity thus afforded to assure the faint-hearted and fearful that the Lord's tender mercy and loving care of His children do not cease with the life of the body, or life on the lower or first stage of man's existence.

The lesson of first importance for mankind to learn is that man is essentially a spiritual being. Though not having life in himself, he is a form receptive of the Divine life, or life of God, who alone has life in Himself. The end or purpose for which man as such was created is that he may be an image and likeness of his Creator by the voluntary reception of love and wisdom into his will and understanding and the embodiment of them in uses, these uses all having reference to the development of the spiritual in man.

Though planted in the earth, that is, in a body taken from the substances of the material world, receiving all his first impressions through the senses of the body, trained to perform uses that seem to have relation only to the care and sustenance of the body; spending years in the study of the natural sciences, and then often the whole of life in efforts to understand and control forces that operate upon the senses and are tangible only to them; yet all the while his real life, that of his will and understanding, is being guarded and developed. Something really human and enduring is taking form and quality, which is seen and known only by Omniscient Eye that sees the end from the beginning and makes nothing in vain.

When one is raised into the spiritual life, all that is extraneous to the real man or woman is gradually loosened and falls off, or rather is removed. This process is only begun by the separation from the material body and the life of the natural world. The examination or uncovering is with most persons from the Christian world a very gradual one. Not that the angels do not perceive at once the states and needs of each, but the revealing of these to the person himself is what takes time and varied influences and surroundings, what might be called experiments and trials on his part, the same as on earth, when he is permitted to choose freely and then test his knowledge and ability.

There are always at hand opportunities and also those qualified to give advice and instruction; but these are never urged, rarely offered, unless there is indication of a felt need for them.

When I first came into this world, I had but vague impressions of the close relation it bears to the one I had just left, though I had been instructed that life here is a continuation of the one begun on earth and that all states passed through there return and must be met and judged, or seen

in their relative value as a part of the training that has fitted us to form an ideal according to, or in harmony with that shown in the One perfect life, and also in those who from love of Him have consecrated their own to the service of humanity.

All this was verified in my experience, not only by the return of various states, but I was brought into association with the people who had contributed their influence to induce those states. I was given opportunity to see the working out of the principles by which they had been led; and how I, by following in a measure this leading, had departed from the straight and narrow path of the denial of self-ability and self-derived intelligence, for only by such denial is one prepared and inclined to yield to the Lord's leading and to accept willingly whatever of discipline His wisdom may appoint.*

That I had not been wholly ensnared was from the guardianship of angels by means of the truth implanted in my mind in childhood, and my own willing acceptance of these truths when I came to maturity.

These had been a shield and defense in later years and in times of temptation that came to test the strength of those principles by which I had sought to order my life. My return to dependence on the Lord's guidance by means of the truths of His holy Word, was not accomplished without humiliation of spirit and inward struggle.

In the end I have every reason to be grateful to the Love and Wisdom that has brought me through the valley, and established my feet upon the foundation that can never be moved, that of an abiding faith in this Love and Wisdom as revealed in the personality of our Divine Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*Late in her earth life she became intensely interested in Eastern occultism and mental healing and possessed with an ambition to penetrate farther than others in the understanding and demonstration of them.

A BLIND BOY.

"Whereas I was blind now I see."—John 9-25.

From Donald who was born blind and was feeble minded in the natural world, to his brother Robert.

I was greatly surprised when told that I had the opportunity to send a message to my brother Robert. Since I came into the intermediate world which is indeed not heaven, but a place to prepare for heaven, if one so desires, I have not seen nor spoken to any one in the world where I began my existence in blindness and ignorance.

I had to begin learning as a little child after I had been raised out of my natural body. I was taken to the home of a gentle angel mother. I had all the senses that other children have and learned through my eyes the wonderful and beautiful things that are made to instruct us in the love and wisdom of our Heavenly Father.

I had no knowledge of these in the natural world. As you know my mind was not opened to receive instruction there as yours has been, because it was not designed that I should remain in that world to grow into manhood. Why this was so is not for me to explain now. It is enough that I have come to see that it is best; and thank the Father that He has led me in his own loving way. I had instruction suited to my wants. I was freed from the infirmities that prevented my development there.

I had angelic tenderness in bearing with my slow progress in learning, and all the helps that anyone could desire until I was sent into this world to be instructed in knowledges similar to those learned on earth. When I came here (from heaven where he was first received) I was like a boy of 14 years and full of questionings in regard to why

the Divine Father permitted evil conditions in any part of his creation. I have been led step by step to see that only by these permissions can the race as a whole become the reflection of His infinite Love and Wisdom; that there is no limit to these in His ways of bringing into harmony the infinite varieties of human qualities that are incarnated in mankind.

I am now in a college in the intermediate world where I am being prepared to instruct others who have been born blind in the natural world or lost their sight in early life and have to learn to use their eyes when they come here. I will not be here much longer and will then be given work as I am needed. This is all I need to say about myself. I am so glad you have the opportunity to learn about this world and the internal sense of the Bible (or the Word as it is called in heaven), that you may not fear to die as many do, and that you may learn to love the laws of the Lord.

You are still a young man and may live many years there. You must not think I will forget or cease to be interested in your welfare. If permitted I will come to you many times and watch over your spiritual life. As brothers we have much in common to overcome because we have like inherited evils; and I have had better instruction in the laws of spiritual life since I came into the spiritual world than you could receive with all the prejudices of the family to hold you in bondage to their traditions.

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER XII.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—Ecl. 12:14.

A man who had been interested in the spiritual welfare of others during his life on earth, after more than three years residence in the inner world expressed the wish to give a continuous narrative that would illustrate more fully what has been briefly referred to in chapter ten of this series. Chapter ten gave the earlier and also later experiences of the same person in connection with much instruction and interesting information.

I desire to give this testimony for the benefit of persons who might be profited by the experience of others, and being warned may avoid mistakes into which they might otherwise fall.

During my life in the natural world I had been well instructed in regard to the laws of spiritual life, and also as to the laws and phenomena of the spiritual world. To the statements and description of these my understanding had yielded full assent, and my course in life was directed to the propagation of them and the doctrines correlated ther-

with. I had a clear intellectual perception of the plan of life that must be followed in order to come into harmony with the ideal presented by these doctrines and laws, and my purpose was to have my own life conform to these laws. I could draw a clear picture of the blessedness of self-denial, self-control, and the abnegation of selfish ambitions and pleasures for the sake of giving and doing for others. I was not actuated by worldly ambitions or gain, in choosing a business that offered these, but apart from such motives resolved to give my energies, time and what ability I might have, to disseminating the knowledge of what so strongly appealed to me as the great want of the age and of the world. This resolution was formed while I was still a young man, and I entered upon my preparation for the work of the ministry with the ardor and enthusiasm of youth. Nor did my interest and zeal abate in the years that followed. There were openings and invitations in other directions, but my purpose did not swerve, and I continued in different fields of labor and with varied apparent successes and defeats, until the end came suddenly and unexpectedly and before age had modified my impetuosity and tempered the zeal of my undertakings.

I was greatly surprised and at first incredulous, when greeted by one of my own calling who, to my certain knowledge, had passed into the spiritual world more than three years before, and thought he must have some message in regard to my work; and said, "Brother, I am here for a moment; have you some message for me?" to which was answered, "You are here to return no more." And so I found it to be.

REVIEWS HIS HEREDITARY AND ACQUIRED EVILS.

To return to the history of my life in the natural world; the foregoing outline does not indicate that there was anything to cause humiliation and regret in the great plan and tenor of life. It would seem that with these ideals before him, a man must steer his course straight and avoid the shoals and quicksands upon which, for want of knowledge so many are ensnared and suffer harm. And it would be so if the understanding and will acted in harmony from the beginning to the end of life. If the intellect were not blinded by the lusts and passions that are kindled into activity by the spheres of evil spirits both in and out of the natural body, that find response because of the hereditary proclivities that must be aroused that their qualities may be recognized and rejected; and so a character be formed that shall be distinctive and abiding, which is the basis of all that is real and enduring in human life. My hereditary inclinations were for beautiful and luxurious surroundings and for stimulating, as well as dainty food. I did not so much covet the possessions of others. I could enjoy what appealed to my aesthetic taste and love of pleasant things without longing to possess them, being content to have them about me as something to be enjoyed and used without thinking much of the ownership. The good things of earth came to be regarded as a kind of common property belonging as gifts of the Lord to one who could make the best use of them. I did not hold with miserly and covetous fingers what came into my possession, but was ready to divide with one in need and to share my comforts with others as there seemed occasion. I did not wilfully defraud, neither was I as careful to recognize the claims and right

of others in the matter of holding and giving as I should have been; and a strictly upright and business way of managing my affairs was never formed. This led into extravagances in planning and promising to myself and to others and into habits of evasion, not meeting things fair and square that I have had reason to regret and be ashamed of. When the books are opened, there is found to have been recorded every minutest detail not only of the acts, but the thoughts and purposes. The intentions that were frustrated and not allowed ultimation stand out in clearly defined lines and can be read not only by the man himself, but by those sent to scrutinize his character.

And yet there are no useless exposures of the secrets of any life. Everything is for the purpose of amendment and reformation and not to excite shame and derision. Nothing of this kind is allowed unless there is an attempt to play the hypocrite, which is not unusual with those who had formed that habit in the world for the purpose of deceiving by making one's self appear other than he is and so gain confidence of the unsuspecting. Then terrible disclosures are presented until the doer is horror stricken and ashamed. Where one can be made ashamed, there is hope of amendment.

All suffering that is permitted on any plane or in any world is for this one purpose, to bring forth as in a birth some new life force to enliven and enrich and in most cases, to supplant that which has done it's work and is ready to pass away. Oh the depth of both the wisdom and goodness that controls all things in the interest of the development and ultimate happiness of His sentient creation. The more one sees and knows of the inner workings of Providence,

the greater is his veneration and devotion and the deeper his humility, confidence, and peace.

TELLS HOW HIS JUDGMENT WAS CONDUCTED AND HIS
EVILS MADE MANIFEST.

"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known." Matt. 10-26.

I will illustrate the foregoing statement concerning my life by a brief narrative of experiences.

I was at my first entrance into this plane of life introduced into a society where were gathered from various localities a goodly number of people I had known in the natural world, to several of whom I had been pastor and instructor, the leader of the society being among the number. From these and their associates I received a most cordial and courteous welcome. Everything was provided for my comfort. Both the social and religious life I found most congenial. Though family and other ties were most tenderly remembered, I had no desire after the first natural impulse had passed to return to the natural world; and entered upon and enjoyed all the activities and means of becoming acquainted with my new environment. There was everything one could desire both to interest and instruct; and for a time I seemed to have left behind me all that could impede my progress or cast a shadow over my horizon. There were unlimited fields to be explored. There were heights to be scaled and depths to be sounded and every resource at hand to assist one who desired to learn and to do; and I had always taken delight in studying into the causes of things.

Little by little I became conscious of losing my interest in new things. Memories were stirred that led me back

farther from all these new scenes, and I would wander alone for hours. Scenes and persons long forgotten would rise before my view, until finally my surroundings were entirely changed and I stood alone as to human companionship and the protection that had been afforded by it. I seemed in a strange city and walked about the streets lonely, inquiring by eye and ear as to the character and occupations of its inhabitants. At length having taken a seat under a spreading oak in a little park that opened from the street, I observed a company of young men engaged in wrestling. I had been fond of this sport as a boy, and my interest increased as I watched these youths until involuntarily I went among them and then was asked to take part, which I did with zest. This led to further acquaintance and I inquired about the city and was told it was much given to social pleasures; and that a great variety of plays and pastimes could be found by a little seeking. I asked if serious subjects were not discussed and useful labor performed; and was answered that a great variety of themes were presented in public meetings, and there were people who worked for the love of it; but for the most part the people took things easy and amused themselves and others with games, theatricals, etc. I inquired as to the public meetings of which they had spoken and was told that one was then in progress in a large hall near by. To this I went unattended and found myself in a large audience room filled with men and women who, it seemed, listened rather indifferently to the speaker who was trying to prove that God and nature are one, being a vital force from which springs a great variety of structure, each animated according to its form. That man having the most perfect and

complex form, has superior order of activities and sensations to those exhibited in any other being of which we have knowledge, and if he followed the higher impulses and used his reason, he is capable of greater development.

He had proceeded for some time with arguments and illustrations to prove his positions, when far back in the audience a frail looking woman rose to her feet, and raising her right hand said, "I have been told that this is a place where free discussion is permitted, and I would like to know if in this audience there is some one who can answer some questions that have come into my mind while listening to the speaker, proving, as he seems to think, that God and Nature are the same. All forms, you say, have sprung forth of themselves with power to propagate and so perpetuate their kind to infinity. Must not this vital essence, or force possess in itself, all the qualities that are exhibited in the multitude of forms originated by it, and also the ability to endow these forms with a power and life to act as of themselves? What then, is this vital essence, and how did it originate? Can there be thought without a thinker? Love without a lover? Motion without force?" She then sat down. There was a profound silence for some minutes, when seemingly to relieve the embarrassment, the first speaker suggested that as they had been together for some time, these questions be left for a future meeting; and that after adjournment all interested remain and arrange for a debate, or the consideration of these themes by positive and negative arguments where as many as were willing could take part.

Forgetting all but my interest in the themes I remained and expressed my willingness to take part in the discussion.

which was to be the following week. Upon going out of the building, I was surprised to find an apartment near by similar to the one I had occupied, with all my books and furniture, so that I could have no doubt that I was to remain there for the present. I concluded to examine my surroundings outside and get acquainted with the general character of the city and its people. I had not walked far until I met some acquaintances, people I had known many years ago, who recognizing me, expressed pleasure at the meeting and the hope that I would find the city pleasant and remain for some time. I replied that I had seemed to stray into the city, without purpose, had stopped in a park, and being directed to the public hall, was interested in subjects to be discussed, and would probably remain for the present. They invited me to join them for a walk and we talked about our former acquaintances and I was asked about my experiences since coming into this world. Some of them had been here much longer and had wandered about a great deal, having had former ideas unsettled and not yet having found explanations to satisfy them.

These people were on the whole very helpful to me as they led me into associations that brought to view every past state and habit of my life; which confronted by the truth I had later received, was made to stand before it for judgment and take its proper place as approved or condemned and rejected.

I will now go back to the discussion in which I was to take a part and to my preparation for this. I felt that my arguments to prove the existence of a divine personality must be addressed to and sustained by a common perception and intuition which could be found in all who had not de-

stroyed them in themselves by false reasonings, rather than to proofs outside of themselves; also that I must seek enlightenment from Heaven to be enabled to have clearness of thought myself. As I did this in humbleness of heart there flowed into my mind with great clearness a perception of truths and their application, of which I had not before thought.

I will state a few of these as presented in the discussion.

That there is in man a world within a world, yea several, each of finer substances than the next outer; and that within and above all, there is a something we call personality that gives a peculiarity to each on every plane and can never be lost; for without it man would not be man. I made an appeal to consciousness and to the unfoldings seen in children on both planes of life. The same is imaged in vegetable and animal forms, potency being in the seed to produce it's kind which gives individuality; and since the Creator is imaged in visible creation, it must be that back of all manifestations, there is a personality that originates these. That we call Esse—the Divine Love—that gives forth all life, movement and being, in forms that can receive and reflect some quality of this First and only Substance and Form. This includes everything, and carries conviction to all who have not closed in themselves internal perception by sophistical reasoning.

There was thus gathered about me a considerable company of which I could have become the leader. This I avoided but remained for some time among them, entering into the social life of the city where I encountered associations that brought up all former states of my life, when

I met rebuffs and humiliations of spirit that brought me face to face with my natural inclinations and desires that had been kept in check: the outward expressions restrained, at least, so that I thought myself a fairly decent man that need not shrink from leadership and honor as long as I could clearly perceive the truths that commended themselves to reason as safe to commend to others. But alas! alas! I had not applied them so as to examine my interior motives and order my life according to their manifest intent. I shrank from the gaze of men and alone in bitterness of spirit bewailed my misdoing and implored the Divine Mercy, not shrinking from any outward humiliation. When I came to this point I felt unworthy to mingle with others who had better improved their opportunities, and I offered myself for any service, even to the lowest and vilest of the human race, if I could thereby make some amends for not having lived up to my light as I might and ought to have done. When I reached this state and exclaimed, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," comfort came to me in a wonderful manner. I was sitting on the bank of a stream much dejected, feeling unfit to mingle with human beings and yet longing for companionship. When one I had known in the world and esteemed above most, suddenly approached and greeted me very cordially. Surprised out of my dejection, I returned the greetings, then relapsed into silence. I was willing that he should know the worst of me, and waited, feeling sure that when he had discovered, as one can in this world, all that had been hidden from human gaze, my own included, he must turn from me with aversion; but instead he came nearer, put his arms about me and looking up said aloud, "There is for-

givenness with thee, that thou mayst be feared." Immediately the whole Heaven seemed ablaze with light, and a myriad voices sang, "Rejoice for the Lord hath brought back His own." I fell on my face, my whole being filled with indescribable joy and love; Love for the Lord, first of all, and for every creature He had made; and joy that His great love folded me in and would give me a place where I might serve in His Kingdom. I remained in this posture until this state of ecstasy had passed, then rose and looked about me. I seemed in a new place, but a light above my face began to move in an easterly direction, which is the sign given to lead us. I came first to a place where two ways met and the light faded. While reflecting as to what this might mean, I was accosted by a stranger who asked if I could tell him which road led to the temple, or school of wisdom; saying that he had been told that though the other looked inviting, there were quicksands along its sides. I said, "The way is new to me and I have had a light so far which has disappeared. I think we must wait and a light will be given, if we do not wish nor attempt to find the way for ourselves."

The man said, "I am somewhat impatient at waiting for I want to go on with my studies; but it is better to wait than to take the wrong road." I said, "Yes, and let us sit down and improve the time in conversation. Have you long been a resident in these parts?" He answered, "No, I have but recently come, and am greatly perplexed by finding things so different from what I had been taught to expect. I have been with friends who told me there is a school not far distant where I would be taught to understand the Bible in a different way than the one held by the

church to which I belonged. I tried to live right and expected to go to Heaven at once; but though I have been kindly treated and in a beautiful country, I cannot reconcile what I find with what the Bible said." My heart went out to the man, and I was able to relieve his mind of many difficulties. When we had paused in our conversation, a light we both saw appeared above us, and began to move. We had not followed long when we came among the friends I had left some months before, who received us with great joy. I found my home had been transferred here and there was a place for the stranger who became one of the community and is now an active worker in instructing others.

IN MEMORY OF HIM BY A FORMER PARISHIONER.

Whenever thy clear voice was heard
Pulpit or platform, home or bier—
Something within the listener stirred
A longing *further* truths to hear.

Conviction that the message given
Your own heart held as truth from heaven,
Was sure one's reason to convince
And lead to searching more intense.

Only God knows how great the yield
Thy faithful sowing shall bring forth,
And knowing called to larger fields
The powers we miss so much on earth.

CHAPTER XIII.

The person whose experiences are related in this chapter had been trained in the faith and was for several years a member of what is called an "orthodox" church.

Later she imbibed the doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventists, a sect that advocates the literal or natural interpretation of the scriptures as to the "Lord's Second Coming" and reign on this earth. They also teach that the physical body will be raised up; when all who have not received the Gospel will be annihilated; the earth purified by literal fire and a new earth prepared for believers in Christ.

She confirmed herself in these views and advocated them in every possible way to the end of her life, which occurred when she was about fifty years of age—two or three years before this conversation with her took place.—*Editor.*

My Dear Aunt*—I have wanted to speak with you. Many times I am with you, hearing what you say and wishing I could let you know of my presence and tell you about my experiences since I left your plane of life. I am glad there is a way opened by which I can speak to you sometimes, if not always when I would like to do so. I am so glad that I can tell you that I am alive and in a happy world. You remember I thought I would not live after the death of the body until the resurrection. I was amazed when I awakened and was told that I was in the spiritual world and was myself a spirit. Everyone who dies in that world is raised up here and all are made welcome and to feel at home. I have wanted to tell you my dear aunt, how much I appreciated your interest in my family and how much I love you for all your kindness to me. We in this world remember most distinctly all the events of our lives in the

*This message came to the aunt here mentioned through the "Narrator" at whose home she was staying.

natural world. It is much like that world in general, and many at first believe they are still in their homes, and make all their plans just as they were accustomed in the natural world. Many try to build houses, but cannot get them to stay as they had planned. They simply fall to pieces. That is because they are not willing to learn the laws of the spiritual world, but are wise in their own eyes, so have to be taught that material laws do not reign here.

Question.—What is your employment, or what are you doing?

Answer.—Telling every one I see that every bit of the Bible has a spiritual meaning.*

Question.—Have you changed your opinion about the Divine Being?

Answer.—Yes, I have found that God is one and not three persons.

Question.—Are there trees and plants in the spiritual world?

Answer.—Yes.

Question.—Can you hear our voices?

Answer.—No, I hear the sound when you think. Many times I am near you and would love to speak to you.

Question.—Can you hear your husband and children?

Answer.—They are turned away from this world and I can neither hear nor see them.

Question.—How is it you can hear us?

Answer.—Because your thought is turned towards the spiritual world. Their whole thought is natural, even when they think about religion.

Question.—Does the Advent faith make people more natural than other sects?

*"Every bit" and similar quaint phrases were characteristic expressions that serve to identify the invisible author.—*Editor.*

Answer.—Yes, because they cannot see beyond the natural world and what is to take place in it. They have no conception of spiritual activities apart from the body.

Remark.—Many think if people are honest in their belief and lead a Christian life, it does not matter if they hold mistaken views.

Answer.—It does matter what one believes, whether he is honest or not. Truth gives light; and what is not true, whether honestly held or not, causes darkness in the mind and so light is hidden from the sight.

Because I had confirmed myself for a long time in false opinion I was in great perplexity and doubt, about everything. You remember I used to believe that the Bible taught that half the race would be judged and annihilated.

Remark.—“We laid your body lovingly away; your family thought that all of you was in the grave.”

Reply.—May they come to see their mistake. Every one is raised up at death. Many go on very soon into heaven. Many are too ignorant to enter that happy state. Many are too evil. Many who found the light in the natural world are detained here that they may teach and help others.

I will now give my first experiences upon awakening in the spiritual world to illustrate my statement that false views honestly held and confirmed in the mind bring darkness and doubt when brought into the light of heaven. I had been ill for a long time and despaired of recovery, and longed for rest too much to be anxious as to whether I should sleep a long or a short time in the ground. I thought the end of the world was near at hand, and then all would be raised and the wicked annihilated, but that I was elected

to life everlasting because I accepted Christ as my Saviour and He would give me immortality. What was my surprise to see, upon opening my eyes as from a sweet sleep, the gentle, smiling face of a dear friend I had known in my girlhood. She spoke of my coming home as though I had been on a journey, and invited me, when I felt rested to walk with her and renew our friendship.

I said, "I am under some kind of a delusion. Either I must be dreaming, or the end of the world has taken place and we are in the new earth, for you have certainly been dead a long time, and I have slept while everything has been made new."

She did not correct my impressions, but said, "If you will bathe and dress in this clothing, we will talk about the changes which have taken place, which are great, as far as you are concerned."

I bathed in a tank of water that stood near my bed and was soon dressed in clothing that fitted my form; and opening the door, found my friend waiting outside. She asked if I felt able to walk about in the new earth; and I answered that I felt well and strong and able for any reasonable amount of walking.

"Then we will go into this city and see if we find a home to suit you."

I said, "I have no means with which to buy a home. We had nothing left of our property,"—thinking things must go on much as formerly.

But my friend said, "In the new earth there is to be no buying and selling. The Lord gives His children all they need, and you will want a home here in which to rest and learn the laws of spiritual life."

"Are there any more laws than I learned from the Bible?" I asked.

She said: "They are all contained in the Bible. You will only need to understand that, to find true wisdom."

I was relieved and delighted, and said, "I love to study the Bible and will begin at once, if I may have one."

"First let us find your home, and then we will get other things as we need them."

We soon came to a house I recognized as one I had longed to possess long ago, and I exclaimed, "There is one I have long admired! If I could only look inside, I would be content to take whatever is provided for me by the Lord who knows my needs."

We went into the house and found it furnished with beautiful pictures and everything I had longed to possess, but I could not believe it was meant for me, until my mother and other friends came to greet and welcome me to my new home.

"Where are my husband and my children?" I asked. "They surely are not all annihilated with the wicked!" And a great fear made me shudder.

I want to say here that the change called "death" does not weaken the natural affections. On the contrary, I seemed to feel more keenly the ties that bound me to my family; and I now see that these are a merciful provision of Providence to save mankind from becoming wholly self-centered and sordid, otherwise there would be no incentive to exertion beyond inclination.

But to return to my narration. I shuddered at the thought suggested by my being alone in the new home; and turning to my guide, said, "Will you not kindly see if my

husband and children are not among the redeemed? Some of them, at least, are true believers in Christ and would not be destroyed."

I saw with different eyes how dreadful is the thought of annihilation when it comes home to one's family.

She gently hastened to assure me that none of my family had been destroyed, but were mourning that I had died and been buried in the ground.

"How is that?" I said, "when I am not dead, but alive and in better health than I ever had in all my life before."

She said, "You are mistaken in thinking that the natural world is to be destroyed. That remains the same as before; but you have left it and been raised out of the natural body and come into the world of spirits, which all who have lived in the natural world enter when released from the bondage of the natural body."

I thought, "What can this mean? I have studied my Bible diligently for years and cannot be mistaken in its meaning; for the words are plain that the Lord will come again, as He ascended, and the dead that slept shall awake and come out of the dust of the earth. And now I am told that the earth is not to be destroyed and that every one is raised out of his body and comes into this world, where the light is from the Lord who is in the sun of this world. There is some mistake about the Bible being the book I thought it was."

I pondered over this when left alone until I fell asleep and dreamed I was on the ocean without pilot or compass and cried aloud for some one to guide me home.

When I awoke, I saw no one for some time and my beautiful home seemed changed for the worse. I fell on

my knees and prayed for light to guide me out of this bewilderment, but no light came until I looked about for something to do that would help others more needy than I was in regard to shelter and clothing. For upon going out of my house, I saw I was in the poorest part of a city, where people were in need of shelter and clothing. After doing what I could I retired to rest, and continued for some time among these people, more and more puzzled about the problems I had to meet, until in despair I cried to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, I had been told, was in the sun of heaven and immediately He sent two men who hastened to me and informed me that they had heard my call for light, and had been sent to comfort me by assuring me that the Lord loves all His creatures and that He wants them to know and love Him.

I said, "I always thought He loved His children, but not the wicked, and now I find I am among the wicked and have wicked thoughts and desires, and that I love my own ways of thinking better than the Lord's ways of doing things; and I have no hope of ever reaching the happy state of angels; so I am trying to give some comfort to others more destitute than I am."

I greeted them at first rather rudely, for I saw they did not belong in that place, and I was not inclined to be seen in these surroundings. They were gentle and kind and led me step by step to see my mistaken ideas, and so into new environment.

To my question—by what authority they were sent to me they said by the authority of God, who loves all His creatures and wishes them to know and love Him; and the only way to know and love Him is by understanding

His Word; that He had revealed a key, by which any one could open a great treasure-house of wisdom. They gave some examples,—as for instance, the resurrection meant, not the resurrection of the body, but the raising into life of the dead spiritual faculties and making them active and in control of our natural faculties.

I began to see that my case might not be as hopeless as I had feared. I was given a little book and told that they would come soon again.

Question.—What was the title of the book?

“The Divine Word.” This let in a whole flood of light, for I saw that the things I had mistaken for heavenly truths were mostly misunderstandings of the Bible, even in the literal sense. My friends came again and brought me other books and we had many pleasant talks. I became hopeful and happy and all my surroundings were changed for the better. I found many friends I wished to see. Life seemed all that I could desire and I praise the Lord every day for all His goodness. My home is now among my friends who knew me in the natural world and they do everything they can for my comfort and happiness. I am usually cheerful and my life is a busy one in every way. I study all the books of the Lord’s New Church, that I may understand the ways He governs the universe and my own affairs, as well as greater ones. I can only rest when I can believe that He is able to over-rule even my mistakes for good. When I know how much sorrow there is from my mistakes, it seems to me I would die of grief, if He could not bring good out of them. My children must learn here what I have learned,—that the Word of God is the law of life, and

my time and strength will be given to help them when they come.

I would like to send a message to Aunt M., telling her how much I appreciate what she has done and tried to do for my youngest daughter. I know that she will do all she can to help my family to see the errors of the faith I taught them, but the work is too great for mortals. Only the Lord can touch blind eyes and make them see, and He will give light as they are prepared to profit by it.

LEARNS TO TRUST.

I have suffered many regrets until I gave the matter into His hands; and now I know He will not permit anything that cannot be turned into good in some way and at some time. It is a wonderful vision that shows this great truth to the mind, and makes it content with its mistakes and cease to regret even its sins, when it sees the height and depth and length and breadth of the all embracing love and providence of the Lord Jehovah, manifested to men in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am now at rest in His loving care. I have made some progress in the understanding of the Word, as it is the light by which the angels are guided.

I will add that since I learned to trust all, I am in a beautiful place where there is no winter and where angels come to teach us; and that I am able to instruct and help many who come into doubt and sorrow, but who intended to do right. It is a great thing to have meant well, even if we did not know much truth; but where light is given, the responsibilities are so much greater.

Remember always that I love you and I hope this account of my experience may be of use to some one in the natural world, for many who think themselves wise are in utter darkness when they come into this world.

CHAPTER XIV.

The person who related the history of his life as given in this chapter, was introduced to the "narrator" by her brother in the spiritual world with the remark—

"A man you have never seen nor heard of wishes to give his experiences in the form of a story which though strange, is true."—*Editor.*

I am happy to have this opportunity of telling you the story of my life.

I am something of a writer myself and so it is quite in my line to dictate my thoughts which I now do in the hope that some one may profit by my experiences.

As this is a true narrative, there will be no effort at embellishment, and as it is not lacking in variety, there will be no need to draw upon the imagination to present it in a way to interest any person with the average amount of curiosity.

EARLY BOYHOOD.

I was brought up in a small city, and had the usual haphazard experiences of a lively boy with no definite purpose except to get all the fun I could, with little consideration given to the duties I owed to others, or to preparation for my own future. It was easy for me to memorize, so I made my way through the graded schools of my native town without much effort.

After I left school, nothing more attractive presented itself, and feeling I must do something to earn my living and make a place for myself in the world, I decided to be a printer; thinking it would give variety and the opportunity to travel from place to place, if I was prospered.

So I set myself to work with more earnestness than I

had ever before displayed. I found employment in the office of a man of public spirit and general intelligence, who also had a desire to be helpful to and stimulate the ambition of any one in his employ. I became a proof-reader and soon learned to discriminate as to the relative value of what was submitted for publication, and as to the style of writing that was most acceptable to the general public.

This led me to try my own ability as a writer and see if I could not improve upon some of the theses that came under my notice.

After a little practice I ventured to give some of my efforts to the editor over an assumed name; and as they were received with favorable commendation, I was encouraged to persevere and in this way added to my modest income, by which I was enabled to adopt a better style of living. This aroused suspicion on the part of my employer that I might not be strictly honest and led him to watch me closely.

GETS INTO PRISON.

I had been entrusted with the mailing of remittances to contributors; and those addressed to my assumed name were quietly withdrawn and put in my desk under lock. These being discovered in my absence, I was arrested and charged with embezzlement; and the proof being so strong against me, I was convicted and sent to the Penitentiary. I did not cherish feelings of revenge or malice, nor did I repine; but put all my energies to work to prove my innocence. I improved every opportunity for writing, thinking that skill in this would be the best witness of my innocence.

But when a man is once convicted of crime and without the influence of money, it is not an easy thing to reverse the sentiment of a community, or obtain a hearing; so time wore on and I was as one dead to the world. My family was poor and without influence, and though they felt deeply the disgrace of my imprisonment, they took it for granted I was guilty and made no effort to learn the truth. On account of my youth and inexperience, I was given a sentence of two years, and when released, went under an assumed name to a distant state where new experiences awaited me.

I had no mother and the ties that bound me to the place where my life began were not strong. Also I had no strong moral convictions, though I was innocent of evil intentions and of positive wickedness.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

I will now go back to my religious training, or the lack of it, in my early life.

Though we lived in a community where it was common to attend church, and the various denominations had their ministers and houses for worship, I was almost a man before I entered one of the latter, and knew little about what was taught in them, or how one organization differed from another.

There came a time when they all united under the leadership of a stranger, who had been invited to hold a series of meetings; and in the general stirring up and visitation that followed, I was asked to attend a meeting for boys and young men, where, for the first time, I heard of a Saviour who offered to deliver me from the evils of my own heart and the temptations that beset young men, par-

ticularly those that led to strong drink and licentiousness. I remained after the service and asked how I could learn more about this Saviour, and get His help to make me a good true man.

I was told to get a Bible and read it every day and to pray and attend church and take part in the services. I did as I was told and in some ways entered upon a broader life, where I found new associates and some kindly interest was shown me.

Still my ideas were vague and indefinite in regard to the object of worship, and of my accountability to Him. I read my Bible for a time, but lost interest after the meetings closed and drifted back into my old habits; but still the thought of the Saviour as following and calling me to come to Him would often return and kept me from becoming careless and reckless, as were some of my associates. When I got into trouble, I soon retired to read my Bible; and the history of Him who had never done any evil, yet was patient when condemned and crucified, touched my heart as it had never been before and melted me to tears. I read it over and over until the picture became very real, and the thought that this Divine Man now governs all things gave me hope and courage.

HE REFORMS.

When released from prison I resolved to devote my life to helping men in every way I could. I found opportunities to do this even in prison, for all are not hardened, notwithstanding they have been guilty of breaking the law.

In the new place to which I had come after my release, I sought employment at the newspaper offices without success; but finally found a place with a job printer, who tried

me on proof-reading and finding I understood the business, offered me board and a small additional pay. I entered upon my work in earnest and with the added motive of love to the Saviour and a desire to benefit my fellow men I soon began to write sketches and stories, some of which were published over my assumed name. This encouraged me to persevere, and I spent all the time I could get in reading and writing, trying to improve my style. I did not ally myself with any religious body but gave myself to my employment and to works of kindness among the poorer classes as I had opportunity.

FALLS IN LOVE.

In one of my rambles, a young lady attracted me first by her kindness to a child in distress; and afterward I grew to love her with all the ardor of which I was capable. She returned my affection; and before asking her in marriage, I told her the history of my life including the term of imprisonment.

Although she did not doubt me herself, she hesitated about withholding anything so serious from the knowledge of her parents; and because I could not bring positive proof of my innocence, we agreed to postpone the question of marriage until my success in writing should prove that my claim to the authorship of the articles in question, was established.

Before this was accomplished, my wife, that was to be, sickened and died, to use the language of the times in which these events occurred.

I felt now like a boat on the ocean, without compass, surrounded with darkness and tempest. My hand was

palsied as far as writing was concerned, and all I did was performed in a mechanical manner.

This went on for some time and I decided to try the effects of travel, not that I might forget, but that I might find some relief from my overburdened feelings.

I enrolled as a seaman on a vessel bound for South America, and in a storm that overtook us, I was cast adrift, but picked up by a vessel bound for the East Indies; and while out on the wide ocean, in the night, had a vision of One whose presence lighted the darkness and stilled the tempest and filled my heart with a peace and content I had never known before. I felt sure that my loved one was safe and happy, and not far away, waiting for my coming; and that the Master had a work for me to do before I could join her in that better land. I resolved to give my whole heart to finding and doing whatever that work might be.

RETURNING—HE IS POINTED TO A NEW LIGHT

I returned to my native land as soon as opportunity offered. The story of my adventures on land and sea would not be useful for the purpose of this narrative. On my way home I made the acquaintance of a man who told me that the spiritual meaning of the Bible had been given to the world, and explained some of the symbols by which it is to be interpreted. Also he gave me the address where I could procure books that would explain the subject fully.

Finding myself homeless and penniless in my own country, my efforts for a considerable time had to be given to providing for my bodily life; and in doing this, I asked the Lord, who had appeared to me in the storm, to guide me in the way of His choosing; and I had unexpected suc-

cess in finding employment and a home among congenial people. I then procured the books I had been told would explain the Bible. And though it took time and earnest thought to comprehend their meaning I was surprised and delighted more and more as I went further into the subjects treated in the different volumes, and as I saw more clearly that they formed a complete and comprehensive whole.

BECOMES ENTHUSED WITH THE NEW TRUTH.

I wondered that the whole Christian world did not welcome such knowledge, when told that it was confined to a few. Soon I began to talk and write about these, but found little response to my recommendations of the books and was told that the author was a dreamer and of unsound mind. My writings met with little better success and were returned with the explanation that they were not suited to meet the public demand.

HAS A VISION.

Necessity compelled me to labor in some way, and as I felt most at home in a printing office and knew the details of almost every department of work, I was able to provide for the wants of the simple life which I was satisfied to lead and spent my leisure in reading and study. About the time I was 50 years of age, I had a remarkable dream or vision. I seemed in a vessel out on the ocean. One evening in the early twilight out on deck a great light shone from the East, clothing everything with a golden luster.

In the midst of this eastern halo, was the face and figure of a man of such dazzling brightness that I could not

look directly at Him, but knew instinctively that it was the same who walked on the water and spoke words of cheer and comfort in the storm, and my whole being was filled with an ecstasy I cannot describe. I was filled also with awe and said, "Alas! I am not worthy to be in the presence of such a glorious Being." I felt more than I can express, and finally asked—"Lord why hast thou appeared to me? What wilt thou have me to do?"

The impression was distinct that I was not to cease writing, that I was to put on paper the thoughts that came to me and leave the result to an all-wise and over-ruling Providence. When I again began to use my pen, there was a distinct impression of an influx from above, or rather from within.

Much of what I wrote is still in manuscript and forms the basis for instruction of a class of persons, who come into this world with spiritual faculties very poorly developed. I cannot explain this more fully now, as the relation of the two worlds is so little known. What I wrote in the natural world is preserved in this.

FINDS HOME AND WIFE.

I was brought into this world after middle life, in my 64th year, and found my home ready furnished, my unfinished manuscripts just as I had left them in the natural world; and soon entered upon a somewhat similar life, but with this difference, that I had much more of companionship, being surrounded by other people who were interested in the same lines of thought, some of whom had penetrated deeper and some not so far as I had.

But before this I was brought to see the reason of the

Providence that had led me in such a strange road; how my spiritual life had been guarded and guided, and I was being prepared for a certain place and use in the Grand Man of Heaven, where I would find opportunity for the fullest exercise of all my powers and faculties. My wife is with me. All we had hoped and desired is more than realized.

A world not less real
Than love that mourns loss,
But the longed for ideal,
The gold without dross.
Some day when God's wisdom
Shall see we are fit
To make the transition,
His love will permit
Our blessed reunion;
And, as we are known
Shall we know each other;
No longer alone,
No distance to journey,
No ages to wait,
When He sends His angel
To open the gate;
The loved and the loving
Shall gather again
In a region where parting
Can never give pain.

—Anna E. Bassett.

CONCERNING NORMAL AND ABNORMAL INTER-COURSE WITH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

BY AN ANGEL OF THE SECOND HEAVEN.

There are few persons whose intercourse with the spiritual world is normal and can be made profitable to others for instruction in the ways of heavenly life. If one is open to heaven he will not feel uncertain as to the character of his associate spirits. *The sphere of heaven brings assurance and peace.*

You have definite instruction in the writings of the church in regard to what is orderly. Man is not to be guided by spirits who assume to dictate to him either what he is to believe or how he is to act. The Lord has given to each one reason and liberty of choice, and these are not to be yielded in any blind obedience to the dictates of spirits, either clothed with bodies in the natural world, or after they have entered the inner world. One must decide for himself and not follow others impressions. He must apply the tests given in the Word and look to the Lord for deliverance if he finds his reason or freedom is infringed upon in the demands made by spirits who converse with him.

There is no healthy communication between the two worlds that produces abnormal mental states and makes one seek solitude in preference to social life or makes the claims of spirits supersede the claims of one's natural relations and duties. The plane on which is one's conscious life has the first claim.

Angels and those who really aspire to be such, do not search for the evils in those to whom they are ministers of mercy, but for the good they can find and stir into activity.

They know that the selfhood of man, is not good and that before regeneration is completed he inclines continually to lapse into, and be led by his selfhood. When he is in this state he is not in the company of angels but in that of spirits like himself. He is incited by them to do the evils in which they themselves delight.

He would become wholly of their quality were he not led to see and repent of the evils he has done. In this repentant state he comes again into touch with good spirits who take no notice of what he may have done, but seek to incite good affections and obedience to the truths he has been led to see and acknowledge. By these, while he does this, they are able to protect him against the assaults of the infernals who are ever in the effort to stir the evils of his selfhood and draw him into their company and under their control.

Angels and *good* spirits do not speak through people in an unconscious state nor cause hypnotic sleep.

Angels desire man to use his *own* reason and do not try to *compel* belief but are in the effort to induce him to seek instruction and compel *himself* to obey.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”—Hebrews 1-14.

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Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER XV.

A former preacher, who had gained the confidence of many people by sanctity of demeanor and propriety of conduct, self-deceived as well as deceiving others, gives a detailed account of his uncovering in the world of tests.—*Editor.*

GIVEN IN A SERIES OF SHORT CONVERSATIONS IN
THE YEAR 1906.

It is a wonderful opportunity for me to correct some of the mistakes of my life in the natural world, that you can converse with the inhabitants of the spiritual world. It is not a common experience, but not disorderly when the conditions are such that men and angels have a common meeting-ground, as is now provided by the opening of the spiritual sense of the Bible.

I have come through much tribulation into a knowledge and love of this great truth. As you know, I was a minister in the Presbyterian Church and loyal to its doctrines and

policy. I had nothing more than the common theological teaching of my church by which to interpret the Bible, and confirmed myself in it by study and preaching.

My external life in the main was not disorderly. I was restrained from many impulses to indulgence of my natural inclinations by fear of losing my influence over the young people of the church and the respect of my brethren, rather than the love of God. That is the first confession.

The next is that I was selfish and cruel to my children. Instead of instructing them carefully in the principles of right living, I exacted a blind obedience and punished without mercy when angered by any disobedience on their part. That is a crime for which I have atoned in bitterness of spirit.

The third confession I have to make is that I was not always sincere in my professions of friendship. There was a case of which you knew, that of Dr. S., who had been a benefactor to me; and yet he was not my style of man; not one who could be turned from the paths of righteousness, as he saw the love of the neighbor required him to act. To him all men were brothers, born of God to live forever. He is now an angel in heaven. He did not have to suffer in the intermediate world. To me he has been a minister of mercy.

To confirm these statements I will briefly review events in the earth-life, and later tell how these were used so that the evil intended was made to rebound to my humiliation and contrition many years afterward.

When Dr. S. was a member of the church of which I was pastor, knowing the need of families to whom he had been called as a physician, he urged that efforts should be

made by the elders and pastor to reach and help these people. He suggested that by friendly visits and kindly interest shown them, they might be led to receive spiritual instruction and into better ways of living.

These suggestions I resented as reflections on my character and conduct, and complained to church officials that my influence had been injured and my usefulness to my own people hindered through the officiousness of Dr. S.

This led to a public trial, at which Dr. S. presented his case and made his defense. My course was not sustained by the sentiment of the community, and I removed to a distant western state, where the remainder of my earth-life was passed.

TELLS OF HIS AWAKENING AND RECEPTION IN THE INNER WORLD.

I will now give you a brief account of my entrance into this world. I had no long sickness, but came rather unexpectedly to myself. I had not very definite ideas as to what the death of the body might bring to me. I hoped to be happy somehow and some where, from the promises to those who believed in Christ as their Saviour; but thought that existence would not be complete until after the judgment and resurrection of the body. I was therefore greatly surprised when told that I had died as to the natural world and been raised out of the body I had in that world.

I seemed to awake from a refreshing sleep in my own home, but soon saw I had made some change; for the light showed me the form and face of one who bade me good morning with a gladness and smile that assured me of a cordial welcome into some desirable conditions.

I answered with what assurance I could assume that I felt somewhat bewildered by finding myself in a room like my own, yet evidently in some house I did not remember to have entered.

The man who greeted me said, "I have the pleasure of welcoming you to the house of your own building in the world where death cannot enter and of which you have formed no distinct conceptions, although you have thought much and talked much about it. You will therefore need instruction in many things and I am sent to guide you should you desire my assistance. Therefore when you have bathed and dressed in these garments, I am at your service."

I arose hastily, for I doubted my friend's sanity, and before I dressed, bathed my face and hands, but not my body, thinking I must be ready to escape, if the man came into the room again. He did not come; and after waiting for some time, I opened the door, and looking out, saw him waiting at a little distance. He came toward me, looking so kind and gentle and with so much dignity and intelligence in his face and bearing that my fears were gone in a moment, and I shook hands with him without hesitation.

THE FIRST TEST—HIS MOTIVES IN PREACHING TESTED.

We walked down the street of a great city until we came to a hill on which stood a church and house and he said: "How would you like a location like this in which to live and preach the gospel?"

I answered: "It is ideal as to location; but where do the people come from that make up the church?"

"They must be gathered from the slums and taught the laws of right living. There are many who never had a chance to learn in the natural world, and now must be cared

for as little children are cared for when they are sent to school and learn the first principles upon which all truly human life must be built. This work is of the first importance; and, my brother, you will find plenty of people to fill the house, if you go out into the streets and call them in."

This was said in order to make me see that I had never cultivated a love for the souls of men, but had preached as a means of livelihood and honor. That I needed such a trial was not expected, and therefore I said, "I am not fitted to mingle with this class. I have always preached to intelligent Christian people and would not know how to address this class. I must therefore decline your offer."

The man said: "We in this world go at the call of the needy; we do not seek to please ourselves."

"Who provides your living while you are looking after the needy?" I asked.

"Every one here is provided for according to the use he serves, so that we have no care about house or anything we need. That is all provided, in order that we may have no care and give ourselves to doing the Master's work."

"This is a new arrangement," I said, "and commends itself to my judgment as the right way, and I will gladly go to work on this plan when I have found the right place."

"To whom will you look to guide you into the right place, seeing you refuse to accept this work offered you?"

I answered, "I will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to give me the work for which I am fitted."

"Then I will leave you for the present to get acquainted with yourself and find your place. By following this path, you will come among some you have met before. Good by."

I wandered along the path that grew more narrow and obscure, for some considerable distance, until I came to an open space where was a solitary tree standing, and under it, sitting on a bench, a man I knew to have died many years before. I was greatly disturbed, for I did not believe what the man had said about my having changed worlds and thought no more of this after we began our walk, but gave my attention to the surroundings.

Now I stopped, and when the man spoke to me, I trembled and turned to flee from him; but he called to me not to be alarmed; that he knew I was coming and hoped he might be of service to me in making me acquainted with the new world I had entered.

I told him I could not believe the man who had told me I had died as to the natural world and left my body to be put in the ground; "For I have a body and feel stronger and in better health than for a long time. Now I am more bewildered with seeing you, whose body I saw put in the ground many years ago. What does it all mean?"

"It means," he said, "that we were mistaken in many things we thought about the change called death and the world we first enter when we leave our natural bodies and rise in our spiritual bodies. The man who guided you first was an angel of heaven. If you had been prepared for heaven, you would have known this and been led at once to your home there; but few from our earth, and fewer still from the church to which we belonged, go directly to heaven, but must learn another method of reading the Bible and practicing its precepts. I am still in the intermediate world and am learning that I knew nothing as I ought to know the truth in order to enter heaven. I will answer as

best I can any questions that may trouble you. In the mean time, come home with me for a rest and sleep."

But I said, "No, I will sit here a while and rest until I can think over what you have told me and try to understand what it all means. I think I must be dreaming or out of my mind, though I seem to be awake and see things about me quite clearly. This water, for instance, seems real and I will try to drink some of it."

SECOND TEST—HIS LACK OF DESIRE AND LOVE FOR REAL TRUTH SHOWN BY THE EFFECT OF WATER—ITS SYMBOL.

I found a cup beside the spring or little lake and raising it to my lips sipped the contents slowly, for the taste was not quite pleasant. The man watched me with great interest and said:

"I am glad you do not turn from the water, though you do not seem to relish it entirely."

"It has a strange taste," I said, "and I cannot take much at a time."

He gave me a look I did not understand and walked up a hill I had not noticed before and was soon out of sight. I lay down on the grass and fell asleep; and when I awakened, I was alone in a plain or valley with a chain of mountains around me. I seemed to myself shut in and shut away from the world without, for the mountains seemed very high and steep. How long I had slept I could form no idea. A haze obscured the sun; and since I was in a new world, there might be a new way to measure time. I gave myself up to reflection and reviewed the experiences of what seemed a previous day. This caused me to go back still farther; ar

gradually my whole life came up in review like the pictures in a panorama. Many things that I had not thought of for years stood out clearly before me, and some of them caused me to cover my eyes in shame lest they should become real pictures on the landscape. My children as babes and during their helpless years seemed to appeal to me for tenderness and protection; and to reproach me for lack of sympathy and instruction. I saw where I had given harshness when they had only acted out the hereditary traits for which I was more responsible than they.

Following out this train of thought, I saw my conduct towards my wife and in all the relations of life in a new light. Then came a picture of the perfect life presented in the gospels to be a model for all who called themselves by His name; and the impression of my unworthiness and unfitness for heaven deepened until I was filled with shame and despair. Gradually this impression lessened and the impulse to action returned.

REFLECTION CAUSES HUMILIATION.

I rose and looked about me; then knelt, confessed my unworthiness and prayed to be led out of this solitude and given a place where I could make some amends for the sins and errors of the past and live a more worthy life. Looking about me again, I saw a path that led to the foot of what appeared at a distance a steep mountain, but receded as I approached; and after traveling some distance, I came to the suburbs of a city where the houses were small and scattered.

I thought I would inquire for lodging, but suddenly remembered that I had nothing to pay for lodging or food (for I began to feel faint and hungry.) Then I said to

myself, I must look for work, or I shall soon die of want, such were my sensations. Then I thought of the work I had rejected with some feelings of contempt, as though it was beneath my dignity; and in contrast came the picture of Him who went among the lowly and did not scorn to be called the friend of publicans and sinners; and I would gladly have recalled my hasty decision, but there was no one in sight to whom I could appeal.

After a long time I met a man in the attire of a common laborer and told him I was a stranger and did not know just where to go or what to do.

He asked, "What do you want to do; and for what kind of work are you fitted?"

I answered, "I have never done much hard physical work since I left college as a young man. I have been a minister of the gospel and only recently came into this world, where I find things quite different from what I thought I had reason to expect; but I do not complain, for I have begun to see other things in a somewhat different way."

The man looked pleased and said, "If you will share my humble home and take part in the same work until you can find something more to your liking, I will show you the way and make you welcome."

I did not this time refuse the offer of hospitality and followed without asking questions until we came to what was little better than a hovel. The man gave me some coarse bread and a vessel to dip water that he said I would find in a brook behind the house. There I hastened to find a stream of clear, delicious water that revived my spirits. I went with the man to a mine, where he showed me a

shovel and said I could have what treasure the mine would yield to my effort. I worked a while and found a variety of minerals and wondered to what use I could apply them. After a time I looked for gold and found what seemed to be quantities of the pure metal and eagerly gathered and hid it, lest I should be robbed.

When I had worked in this way for some time, the sun seemed to set and I thought I would conceal my treasures and go back to the place of shelter for the night. When I looked about, I could not tell the direction from which I had come and sat down to consider what I had better do, as I felt afraid to spend the night in the open air and it grew colder and colder in the darkness.

Then I thought, What good will it do to gather gold and conceal it from the man who sheltered me and divided his food with me? Of what use can the gold be to me alone, or to us both, if we cannot buy food and clothing and a better home? I had always desired money to use for my family and longed for wealth with which to travel and see the world and enjoy the luxuries of life; but had been hampered and made to feel my dependence upon the generosity of the church. Now this longing for wealth returned and I resolved to try to get what I could out of the mine and make the most out of this opportunity to gratify the wish for riches.

*LET INTO HIS SELF-HOOD—SELF-LOVE SHOWS ITS
QUALITY.

This settled, I fell asleep and dreamed my wife came and claimed whatever I would find in the mine. I repulsed her and said, "For once I am going to have things for my own

*H. H. Nos. 502-507.

pleasure and want no interference from you or any one else."

She turned away and my sons came and asked to be given a share in what I had found; but I drove them back and said, "I have given you what I could spare in fitting you to take care of yourselves and now I want this chance to enrich my own life."

Even my daughter's appeal that she was poor and helpless failed to change my purpose to get things in my own hands and to give nothing unless I chose to do so out of my abundance.

This was rather a vision than a dream; and when I awoke, the impression was very vivid, and the feeling that I wanted to do this thing, strong. When the light returned, I searched for my gold but found instead a mass of rotted flesh that bred worms and stank. I shuddered and recalled my dream and asked myself the reason of all this.

The man who had befriended me now came in sight and I hid myself behind the rocks and hoped he would not look for me; but he called to me and asked why I did not come home in the evening. I told him about finding the gold and that I was afraid of losing it and that I could not find my way back when it grew dark; that I had concealed the gold and in its place, behold what I find!

"This is the way the Lord tries us, to prove the purpose of our hearts," the man then said. "I saw that you had never explored the inner motives of your life, but that you thought yourself incapable of selfishness to your family and friends; and now this vision reveals what you would do if left to your own selfish nature."

I had not told him of my vision and shuddered that any one should suspect me capable of such baseness. I said, "It was only a dream; now I would not act in that way."

But the man said, "You did act in just that way when let into the state of your selfhood; and this I can prove by your family, if you are not willing to see that such is the case."

I admitted that if left to myself I might be guilty of any crime.

Then said the man, "You are in a state to be instructed and reformed and so prepared for regeneration."

HUMBLER BUT NOT CONVINCED.

This was more than my selfhood could bear. I said, "But I am a Christian now. 'If left to myself, I might do as other unconverted men have done;' but when I gave myself to Christ and became a Christian, I was saved from my sins and adopted into the family of God, so that I am washed and made pure in the blood of the Lamb and cannot come into condemnation."

"It is true," was answered, "that no one is condemned for his hereditary evil nor for the evils of his life, if he is willing to confess that all good is from God, and to be led now by the laws of the Divine Love that goes out to seek and save the lost; that asks nothing in return, but finds happiness in giving to others all that they are willing to receive."

I then said. "That is right, if a man can live on faith; but my experience has been that every one has to look out for himself and his family, or he will be apt to fare badly."

Then said the man: "If you prefer to follow this course here rather than to seek to know and do the Lord's will,

trusting in Him to provide for you, go into the city and build your own house out of materials you can gather from the public supplies. Every one is permitted the use of what he finds in these and can build according to his liking."

TRIES TO BUILD HIMSELF A HOUSE

The mine had disappeared and I was in another place. I was pleased with the prospect of building myself a house and soon found the material I had been told about. I began to plan a house of wood with a stone foundation, and asked some men I saw near to assist me in getting the material together in a location I selected that was considerably elevated above the surrounding lots. I could not give them money, but said I would endeavor to repay them as soon as I was settled and found employment in teaching. I had given up the idea of preaching, at least for the present; but thought in a city like the one before me, I could find a position as teacher.

The men readily assisted me to remove what I had selected; indeed, the material seemed almost to move itself to the place I assigned it, and I found no trouble in putting it together according to my desire; but the parts did not fit well, and what I built in one place did not seem to agree with what was to come later. At last, wearied with the effort, I lay down among the timbers and went to sleep and dreamed I was among savages that wanted to destroy me from the earth, and in terror I sought to hide in the house I had begun to build, but it would not shelter me from their assaults.

I awoke in great fear and set to work with renewed energy to make myself at least secure, for I did not like to

looks of the people I had seen about me. Also I was in need of food and my clothing looked worn and soiled. Some workmen passing gave me food and I found water in a muddy stream not far away; and being refreshed, began to lay together the stones I had at hand; but for reasons I could not understand, nothing I did satisfied me for long at a time. So I made slow progress and when night again came I was little better sheltered than on the previous evening. The noise of wild animals disturbed my slumber. Things becoming no better, but rather worse as the days went by, I became utterly disheartened in regard to providing for myself. Then I humbled my selfhood and cried to the Lord for deliverance. It was then Dr. S. was sent to me.

FAILURE LEADS TO PRAYER AND THIS TO DELIVERANCE.

When I knew not where to turn for shelter and light and called on the Lord for help, Dr. S. came in the night and asked if I would like a friendly hand to lead me to my home in my Father's house.

I replied, "I am bewildered by this darkness and by finding everything so different from what I expected when I left the natural world. I thought the Bible taught that mankind would all be raised up from the grave and stand together before the judgment seat of Christ; and I hoped to be saved from hell through my faith in Him as the Saviour of the elect, to which number I had no doubt I belonged, as I had been a Christian from my youth and called to preach in early life. Here I find that every man alike stands or falls on his own merits. If he has done evil, he meets his deserts, whether he believed in Christ or not. I had not expected to sit on a throne, but I did expect to

hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;" and to be clothed in white raiment that would cover all my sins. I find instead that I have nothing but tatters of clothing that do not protect me from exposure to derision and cold.

He encouraged me to express all my thoughts and desires and then said: "My dear Mr. L——, I am so glad that you are not satisfied with the surroundings and that you think you may have been mistaken in regard to the meaning of the Bible, rather than to condemn the Bible for misleading you. There is hope for all that are willing to be instructed and that are willing to be guided by the Bible, when its spiritual meaning is revealed to them. You remember the Lord's words, "The words that I speak unto you are spirit and life."

"Yes," I said, "but who could know that what was said in the letter meant something entirely different?"

He replied, "We cannot discuss that now, but if you are willing, I will conduct you to a place where these things will be explained."

I said, "I cannot go among people in these rags and with dirty hands."

He showed me water near by; and the touch of that sent thrills of pleasant sensations through my entire body and inspired courage and hope. I did not recognize my guide until I was bathed, and was so overcome with surprise and shame that I fell at his feet and wept aloud. He raised me in his strong arms and spoke words of comfort and hope, as if I had been his own brother, instead of the false persecutor that I had been to him, and said, "I have great pleasure in seeing that you can bear the touch of this water; for all do not find it pleasant."

We then conversed while he led the way towards the better part of a city we soon entered, and into a house he said would be my home for the present. Here I found raiment of various kinds and was soon clothed in a clergyman's suit and then conducted to what seemed a college, but proved a school for beginners in the study of the laws of the spiritual life.

STILL THOUGHT HIMSELF WISE IN THEOLOGY.

I was not yet ready to confess my ignorance of the great truths of religion and said, "I am not a beginner in the study of religious truths. I have for many years studied theology and preached in the Presbyterian church."

Then said the leader of the school, "Will you please tell us to whom you are accustomed to address prayers in your devotions?"

I answered, "To God, in the name of Jesus Christ."

"That is well," he answered, "but what do you mean by 'In the name of Christ'?"

I replied, "'In His name' means because He suffered and died in our stead; and therefore we are accounted righteous in the sight of His Father, if we trust in His righteousness."

"But what becomes of the Scripture that says every one will be judged according to the deeds done in the body?" was asked. "Do you not know that God is no respecter of persons; that the soul that sinneth, it must die?"

I said, "That is for unbelievers, not for Christians, who have accepted the conditions provided for salvation."

Then he asked, "Who taught that man could be saved in this way?"

I answered, "The Bible says, 'To him that believeth, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.

Then said the leader, "The question is resolved into another; 'What is true, saving faith?'"

I hesitated about answering for a moment and he continued:

"Instead of faith, let us substitute the word 'sight,' since faith is the sight of the spirit, and in this sense it is used in the Word."

I said, "If it were sight, it would not be faith, for faith is not about things we know, but in things we can not understand and must therefore trust in what the Bible says about them."

"The Bible," said my instructor, "is indeed the light by which all are to be guided; there we are agreed and on this foundation we can stand while we study together the great laws of the Divine government of men and angels. In the first place we will consider what is said in regard to the object of faith in the Word."

I asked, "Is not faith in Christ the one requisite of salvation?"

"And who do you think Christ is?" was asked.

I replied at once, "The second person in the Trinity, the Redeemer and Saviour of men."

"And who is the first person in the Trinity?" was the rejoinder.

I hesitated a moment and then answered, "The Infinite, Unknowable, Eternal and Omnipotent Father, who created and sustains the universe."

"That is well said," was the reply; "and since He is in His essence unknowable, He has revealed Himself to His

creation in the person of Jesus Christ; and in this Divine Humanity all may see and approach Him. There is no other door into Heaven, as He Himself taught, 'I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.'

I said, "That is by faith in His Merits."

His reply was, "His merits are that He fought against the whole power of evil and subdued it, so that He is the Redeemer and Saviour in the sense that He can now reach mankind and deliver all who will take hold of His omnipotence by resisting the inclination to selfish and evil loves, and obey the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself."

I said, "No man is able to keep the commandments; they are not given as the ground of salvation, which is faith in the merits and righteousness of our Redeemer. This is the belief of the whole Christian world, that man is saved by faith alone. This," I said, "ought to settle the matter, for in this all denominations are agreed."

To this was replied, "This matter is not one to be settled by human legislation, but by the great, eternal principles of righteousness, now revealed by the opening of the internal sense of the Divine Word and by the Second Coming of the Lord, in which opening is given a new revelation of Divine Truth that must be seen in the understanding and acknowledged in the will, in order that man may come into harmony with the angels in heaven."

He then said, "If you are prepared to receive these internal truths, you can remain with us; if not, you will not be admitted into the classes to interrupt them with the introduction of unprofitable discussions."

REFUSES INSTRUCTIONS AND SEEKS TO CONFIRM
FORMER BELIEFS.

He then proceeded to explain the principles of the Science of Correspondences, by which the Word is to be interpreted; but it was a strange language to me and I departed to seek my own kind of people and to learn from them that the Bible is the Word of God in the way we had believed it to be.

The first man I met was a Presbyterian elder, who accosted me in these words: "I am anxious to find some one who can tell me how it is that our natural bodies are not to be raised out of the graves as the Bible taught us to expect. We have better bodies and no use for them (the natural ones); yet I thought the Bible could not mislead in anything.

"Then, we are not in heaven, the home of the blessed, as I expected; but in a world so much like the one we left that I can hardly believe I am not still in the same world, but in another place, except when I meet those I knew had long been dead.

"There are other difficulties I meet in reconciling the statements in the Bible with the conditions I find in this world, just as there were difficulties in reconciling the facts of scientific knowledge with the statements in Genesis in regard to creation. This is what shakes my faith in the Bible altogether, and I am in doubt about everything I formerly believed, and think I must find new light, or I shall not know which way to turn."

I told him frankly that I was thinking the same things and that I had just left a place where the leader professed to teach a new way of understanding the Bible; but

seemed to destroy all the foundations of our faith. So I had come out of the house and was trying to find some of my own church who could help me arrange for a meeting. I was delighted to meet one of my own faith and immediately proposed that we call together as many ministers and elders as we could think of. I had found that earnest thought brings presence in this world. So I called several and told them the history of my troubles and of my meeting the elder and of our conversation. We seemed to be in a wide plain, where there were no trees to shelter us from the cold wind; and the clouds had gathered again, so that we sought shelter in a deserted house that had once been a mansion.*

IS CONFRONTED WITH DIFFICULTIES.

The meeting took the form of a Presbyterian Assembly. We chose a moderator and began our service with prayer; but when we asked if any one had a Bible, not one could be found. Our faith had been so disturbed in regard to the teaching of this book that we did not consult it any more, and only thought of reading it because of the old habit we had formed in the world.

We debated the questions that had been in our minds and some said the Bible had taught so many things contrary to reason and experience that there was no use in trying to defend it; and they would try to find a religion that was consistent with the order of things and permitted a man to enjoy what was created, without the constant dread of an angry God, who did not seek our happiness, but His own

*In the spiritual world exterior surroundings are always the reflection or image of the interior thought and affection of the inhabitants.

glory in sending men to hell, if they did not obey His arbitrary commands; not knowing, many times, what was meant by their prohibitions.

Others said that the Bible had been their help and comfort through many trials, and taught them to love the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour; and they could never believe it was not the Word of God, for they knew it was not like other books. This divided the assembly; and those who loved the Bible said there were many things they could not understand, and they hoped to find some one who could explain the meaning of these things, for they could not give up the Bible. There must be some way to find its meaning. I told them about meeting Dr. S. and the school he took me to visit, and the things I had heard there.

MAKES A WISE CHOICE AND FINDS HOME AND FRIENDS.

This seemed to delight them very much; and they all agreed to go back with me, if I would return to the school and ask admission for the company. This we did, and were cordially received and given homes where we enjoyed every comfort and advantage to grow in the knowledge and love of God, our Saviour. Our joy increased with our knowledge, and we soon found many confirmations of the truths that were taught us about the internal meaning of the Word.

I remained in the school many months until I was prepared to teach the internal sense of the Bible to my brethren of the same and other orthodox churches; and since have gathered and taught as I had opportunity, those who were willing to receive instruction. I have not remained in one place, but have been transferred into brighter regions, as I grew in the knowledge and love of truth and good.

ADDENDA.

More than a year after the completion of the foregoing narrative this was added:

I wish to say of my narration that no fact in regard to my earthly history is too strongly stated and there is nothing that I wish suppressed.

These were given in the hope that they might be useful to others. If any words could add to the reality and intensity of the narrative of my experiences, I would gladly give them; for words can give only the shadow or glimmer of a picture compared to the deep roar of the ocean and the living, throbbing movements concealed beneath its surface.

So it is in every human life sooner or later. One may float on the surface for a long time, but when the channels of the great deep are discovered, every one finds in himself a world within a world, deeper and still deeper, higher and more far-reaching in its longings and desires, which only the Infinite can satisfy.

I will add this. My progress has been more rapid and my life broadened and more satisfying.

We shape *ourselves* the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our Future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

—J. G. Whittier.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Voice from the Past

"And they shall come from the east, and from the west and from the north, and from the south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God"—Luke 13-29.

This story of a simple peasant woman points to the care of Divine Providence over all, with great clearness and force, showing how wisely the Lord instructs and leads the teeming millions of uncultured people, who to appearance, have no instruction in regard to the future life.

This simple story will interest and instruct any who feel concerned about what becomes of the common people who have no clear thought about spiritual life.—Rev. B. Edmiston.

I am instructed by the angel who has just left me, that you are capable of receiving and transmitting to paper, and so to others, the experiences of persons who lived in different times and countries than your own; and who are now in the spiritual world, where time and space are only indicated by changes of state that enable us to live our individual or separate lives, and also secure to us that protection from intrusion that makes it possible for each to have his or her own home environment.

With this explanation I will proceed to tell you the story of my life, first in the natural world, and now since long before you were born, in the inner world where all are gathered when the first stage of life, the embryonic, is completed.

GIVES HISTORY OF HER EARTH LIFE.

My life began in a country where the education of woman was regarded as a hindrance, rather than an advantage.

tage to her and to others, as it would divert her attention from the main object for which she was permitted to be born and to live—to give birth to and rear citizens for the commonwealth—warriors and laborers—whose strength would protect the government and provide for its preservation and extension.

I will not dwell further upon outward conditions, but give the history of my inner life with such reference to the outer as shall be necessary to explain the progression of states in the inner. The true measure of life is not by the revolutions of the earth, but by the attitude of the individuality or selfhood to the Source of its being, the Sun of Heaven. As in the natural universe, so in the spiritual, light and heat make no impression unless there are forms and faculties adapted to their reception. So emptiness and vacuity reign until created forms can be prepared that can be vivified and live and act as from themselves, before there can be manifestation of life, and the love that gave birth to this manifestation.

Having had so little instruction in childhood and only the impression of my mother's caresses to give me any conception of love and tenderness, I had but faint and meager store upon which to build a heavenly character; and it is a great proof of the Divine resources, that the Lord can in His great compassion use so little and multiply it a thousandfold, when we are passive to His providential leadings.

I was married early in life and brought up a large family in conditions that required constant toil, with little of recreation or change. My husband was not unkind, but he did not speak to me about spiritual things, and seem-

ingly took no interest in anything beyond his work and the affairs of the neighborhood in which we lived.

We attended the weekly religious service, and I took pains to learn what I could for the sake of the children who were my constant care and comfort. I received them as sent from heaven and tried to train them in the way I thought would fit them for a larger life than had fallen to me or their father.

About middle life disturbances arose in our country and sore troubles came into our home, so that we removed to a strange country and there some of my sons were led into danger and one of them was killed. When my faith and courage had almost failed, my eyes were opened to see that the earth life is only the beginning of existence and that if I would be patient and trust in my Maker, *for I did not yet know Him as my Saviour, until He revealed Himself at this time*, He would lead me to a better home, and also bring my family through in safety. From that time I lived as in the presence of the Lord; and though subjected to many outward trials and inward struggles, I never lost sight of the light that guided my steps through the journey.

THE TRANSITION.

At the last, surrounded by my children and blessed by their love, I fell into a sweet sleep, and awakened in a more beautiful room than I had ever beheld in my earth life. A loving, gentle face smiled upon me and bade me welcome to a home in my Father's house, where sorrow, trial and conflict would reach me no more.

My husband had preceded me by several years, and I was so astonished when I saw him soon after I awakened, that I almost fell into a swoon from very joy and thankful-

ness. His face was bright with an intelligence I had never thought he possessed and beamed with affection and joy, as he clasped me in his arms and with many endearing words welcomed me to share the home he said only awaited my coming, to be all he desired to complete his happiness.

We had been simple and unlearned, with few aspirations for distinction, only wishing to do our duty to our neighbors and bring up our children in the fear of the Lord and to be good citizens. We had loved order and beauty in as far as it could be combined with the graver work of providing for the comfort of the home.

DESCRIBES HER "HOME OVER THERE."

There was nothing to dazzle by its splendor now, but a soft and gentle radiance seemed to fill the house, and shed a halo around on field and garden, where grew modest flowers and lowly shrubs, with a few trees to afford shelter for birds and resting places under their foliage.

It was a happiness of which I had never dreamed, and when told it was all a gift of our Father's love, I said, "Oh, how can we ever express our gratitude and love to Him!" "How can we show our appreciation of all His goodness?" "By being messengers of mercy to the wayward and unhappy," said a gentle voice beside me; and turning I saw the face that first welcomed me to my Father's house. I said, "Teach me how to do this, and show me where to find any I can help, and I will gladly do whatever I may." "Rest now," was the reply, "and the way will open before you as you are ready for the work."

NOTES CHANGES IN HER FRIENDS.

We were soon surprised and delighted at receiving visits from friends and relatives who had preceded us to this

beautiful and peaceful land. They were little changed when we first saw them except younger and much better looking, but soon we perceived a great difference in their ideas as expressed in the conversations that followed; and when I asked how they had learned all these things, they said they had been in schools where angels were the teachers and that most of the teaching they had received in the natural world on religious subjects, was wrong; but they were not rejected on that account, nor condemned for believing what they had been taught. I noticed that as they talked about the new truths they had learned, their faces became more beautiful and a soft light shone around them, so that I was eager to ask if I too could learn all these things. I was told that this was a part of the preparation every one must have before he could engage in the work of helping others; for without it, we would be blind guides, not knowing the way to go ourselves and so unfit to lead others out of darkness and trouble. I said, "But there is no trouble here in this beautiful place, and every one seems happy." "Yes," was the reply, "But only those who wish to do the Lord's will above everything, can find the way and enjoy staying here. There are many who prefer to follow their own way. As a consequence, they come into darkness and trouble, and need much urging and teaching, and sometimes, suffering before they can be brought to see that their selfish way is not the best way.

With more of this conversation and many expressions of glad welcome that we were come, we were left by ourselves in our new home.

HAPPINESS IN THE SECLUSION OF HOME.

I then gave myself time to consider the wonderful things I had heard and seen, and to enjoy the companionship of my husband, who seemed more changed than I would have thought possible in a much longer time. He had become familiar with the things that were new and strange to me, and answered my questions with so much readiness and so clearly that I was satisfied and delighted. The thought that we now were married for eternity, increased my joy above every other consideration; and we knelt and offered thanks together for the loving-kindness that led us safely home.

After exploring our house and surroundings, we each retired to an apartment that was sacred from intrusion and fitted for repose, where no one could see what we saw and no one spoke to us but the Lord our Maker, who sees the innermost recesses of the heart.

There is in every Heavenly Home such an apartment for each inmate and no one else desires or can enter it.* Here I reclined on a couch and passed into a refreshing sleep, from which I was awakened by the consciousness of a presence that inspired both awe and love.

I will not attempt to describe that interview that left a lasting impression and nothing to be regretted or desired, for everything had always been right and always would be, however the present seeming.

GOES TO A PLACE OF INSTRUCTION.

I was some days later taken by my husband to a place of instruction, where were teachers and libraries of books that treated all subjects that are of interest to spiritual beings, whose conscious life is in the spiritual world. I grew

*T. C. R. 746-747.

daily more eager to learn and more joyful and happy. Also my love for all human beings made me long to be of service to any who might need anything I could give.

I have given this brief sketch of what seems to the world a commonplace, uneventful, narrow life, to encourage others who are similarly circumstanced on earth, and assure all who live according to the light given them, that they are laying the foundation of a structure, whose walls can be adorned with all manner of precious stones, and one that will endure forever; and preparing for a life that will grow broader and richer and more blessed continually.

Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice
Where love its arms has opened wide,
Or man for man has calmly died,
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head!
Up from undated time they come,
The martyr souls of heathendom,
And to His cross and passion bring
Their fellowship of suffering.

—J. G. Whittier.

CHAPTER XVII.

The author of this narrative from early youth made the most of her opportunities for mental and spiritual development. She, under great difficulties, worked her way through college, became a teacher and later the wife of a Methodist minister. Being well known to the publishers, she was a person they would think had passed her judgment and completed her regeneration in this life.—Editor.

I have been told that you can talk with people in this world and I wanted to tell you that I have found myself in a happy place with my friends and that my life and hopes are brighter than they were before I made the change called death in that world. I was awakened by some one calling me. When I opened my eyes I saw a woman bending over my bed and smiling into my face. She said, "How are you this morning?" I answered, "I feel much better than when I went to sleep and I hope I will be able to get up and dress myself and then I will be happy to converse with you."

She replied, "Do not be in haste. When you are well rested we will talk about plans for the future."

I said, "I make no plans for the future, I am an old woman and can only sit about and wait until death makes me free from this helpless condition."

She replied, "You are not helpless any more. You can give me your hand and I will assist you to rise." I made no objection and she lifted me and said I could bathe myself and find my clothing. I was surprised to find I felt able to do this and thought a miracle of healing had been performed on me. I was delighted and was soon ready to go out where I found my friend waiting for me and we

walked with a great deal of my old time rapidity for some time when she appeared to have stepped away from me and I was alone. I looked about and saw no one and was about to turn back when a man spoke to me whom I remembered to have seen a long time ago but whom I knew had died many years before. I was shocked, and said, "Where did you come from? I thought you had been dead many years, but it seems I was mistaken." He replied, "I have been what you called dead many years but you see that I am alive, more so than when you knew me and I have been sent to tell you that you too have died as to the natural world and been raised into the world of spiritual beings where all come when they leave their bodies and where I am happy to tell you you will be welcomed and loved by the angels and given all things that will make you comfortable and happy." I was too much surprised to reply, but stood in wonder looking into his face, when another man—my husband—lifted me in his arms and brought me to his heavenly home. I am your sister and will be glad to see you come into this beautiful world where there is no sickness and sorrow. My dear sister, all you have believed and hoped, you will realize sometime and your joy will more than compensate for what you have suffered. I am in my husband's home in the second heaven where I am more blessed than I can tell you. My mother is here too, looking young and beautiful as an angel, and she is an angel of this heaven. We all worship the Lord Jesus Christ as the only God of heaven and earth. Angel teachers who were once men and women like ourselves are with us and give us all the instruction that we need. I am learning that the Bible is not to be understood as it seems to read but

that it is all about the Lord and heavenly things and that my instructors in the church on earth were not acquainted with the real meaning of the Bible, therefore taught much error and falsehood. I am learning too that what Mr. F—— taught me is the real truth about how the Bible is to be understood and I have longed to tell him to teach the same doctrines to as many as he has the opportunity. My beliefs were changed by what he taught concerning the way to read the Bible. I wish to bear testimony to the faith, or system of doctrine, called in the scripture, "the Holy City—New Jerusalem." It is the same truth that is the light of this heaven, and I wish to say that happy are the people who know the joyful sound of its message to mankind. I would have liked to have known more of it there but it was not given me to learn much, though I made use of what I did hear. I wish all the churches believed and taught these heavenly truths but there appears to be much aversion on the part of the preachers to let people know that there is anything more than they give them.

Remark—They themselves are ignorant of these truths.

Reply—Yes there is a great darkness over the minds of the ministers of the so-called orthodox churches.

Question—Has higher criticism something to do with it?

Reply—Yes and love of the world more to do with it than anything else. Few are ready to be called meddlers in new thoughts.

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER XVIII.

The person who gave this testimony was of New England birth and training. In early manhood he spent a few years in teaching school, during which time he was an earnest student of the Scriptures and read them in ancient and modern languages. When twenty-nine years of age he responded to the call for missionaries and preachers in the West, where he spent the remainder of his life as a preacher of the Gospel as he understood it. He was noted for his diligence and devotion, his exposition of the prophetic parts of the Bible and the emphasis he put upon sanctification in heart and life as taught by the early Methodists. His earth life ended in 1869, forty years before this testimony was given. He was well known to the person by whom this message was received.—Editor.

DEATH THE GATEWAY TO A BROADER LIFE.

I am very glad to have the opportunity and privilege of giving my testimony in addition to what you have received from others in confirmation of what has been revealed to those in the plane of nature through the prophets and seers of olden times and also by means of human agency in various forms and degrees even to the present; that the death of the natural body is a means of entrance into a larger, fuller and in every way a more satisfying realization of life.

Words fail to furnish any just comparison when one has for a considerable period had experience on this side and then is remitted into the memory and feels something of the influence of the environment from which he has been freed.

O! that I could give expression to my conception of the comparative value of what is prized in that world and in this, including mental as well as material wealth, especially if the mental has not been used to form a basis or foundation for the support of a spiritual structure.

THE BIBLE VINDICATED.

I also want to bear testimony to the truth of the Bible as unfolded in the development of human life on the spiritual plane. The most serious trouble that crossed my path after entering the spiritual world was from the wrong conceptions I had formed and had confirmed in my mind by much study of the letter of the Word, and of the history of the race, applying all, even the prophetic portions to what had and would occur on the material plane. The belief in the resurrection of the physical body as necessary to the completion of human life kept the thought from ascending beyond that plane and forming a conception of a distinctively spiritual life. When first informed that I was in the spiritual world and myself a spirit I was not only incredulous, but full of remonstrance, and both inwardly and in words argued and protested against such an overthrow of my faith in what the Bible had taught about death and judgment.

THE TWO PLANES CLOSELY RELATED.

Another great truth to which I desire to give my testimony is that the two planes of life are most closely united

and that the inhabitants of the spiritual world are intensely interested in those still in the natural, especially in whatever contributes to their development as spiritual beings and are eager to give aid to any measure that will assist to bring about this development. I will not enlarge on this now, but may refer to it again.

There have been great changes in the social and religious life of the people of my country since my boyhood and youth and even since my mature manhood. My active life of nearly half a century closed not long after a civil war had wrought desolation to many homes. I had not engaged in this war myself except indirectly by encouraging others to support the government of our country, being employed in preaching what I thought the Gospel of Salvation, that would prepare men for death, judgment and the future life. I had been diligent and sincere in this work to which I felt myself called by the Lord.

THE SLEEP AND AWAKENING.

I will now give some account of my entrance into this plane of life and the experiences that followed. Not an old man and not expecting death, I was pursuing my usual course of holding meetings and going from place to place, when after a short but severe illness I fell into a deep sleep in which I lost all consciousness of suffering and awakened refreshed and thankful for the rest. I lay thinking, when the text, "With Thee is the fountain of life" came distinctly to my mind and brought a sense of security and of the Lord's presence. A film seemed lifted from my eyes and looking up I saw the face of a stranger, yet one that inspired confidence and pleasure. He greeted me with words

of welcome to the home of my aspirations and desires, where sickness and poverty need no more hamper and disturb the full realization of all I had tried to be and to do. I replied, "I will be very thankful if you will explain to me how it is that I am not in the parsonage with my wife and that I came to this strange place which you call my home while asleep, or at least I have no recollection of making a journey and yet the place seems new and I feel much better than before, I slept. The man said, "You will feel stronger still if you will rise, take a bath and come out into the air and sunshine." He then retired and I did not hesitate to try my strength though with something of wonder in my mind at the relief I felt from feelings of discomfort and the ease with which I could move around.

I had been told to dress in the clothing at hand which I did after a bath that seemed to thrill me with life; and going out of the door that opened when I was ready, saw the man who had greeted me, standing as if waiting. He came near and with a kind smile asked if I felt like taking a walk. I answered, "I have not felt so well in years and want very much to know by what miracle I have been suddenly restored to more than my usual health. The man replied, "It is by the miracle of the Lord's love that all are freed from disease and infirmity when raised out of their natural body and brought into the spiritual world, where you now are and where the sunshine of this love can be more fully realized than on the plane of nature."

PROTESTS THAT HE IS NOT DEAD.

I wondered what he could mean and said, "But I am not of my body. I have not felt so well in years and

have better use of my body," I said, extending my arms and walking briskly, "Do not try to impose upon me by telling me that I am dead." "That is all true," was replied, "Yet you have died as to the world of nature and are a spiritual man and in the spiritual world. You have no further use for the body that served you on that plane and have left it behind to be buried in the earth." "Then the Bible is a book of falsehoods to tell me that my body would be raised when I have no use for it. This is better in every way." "You did not understand the Bible in regard to this and many other things," was answered. But I said, "The words were plain and could not be mistaken. I must have been out of my mind and this is but a dream or delusion and yet I feel awake and well."

IS INTRODUCED TO HOME AND FRIENDS.

To this there was no reply, except that in a few moments he said, "Come let us find a home where you can rest and receive your friends," and the man led the way to a neat and well-furnished house and asked how I liked the looks of it and the grounds about. I said, "Very much, it is just what I would like for a home." "Then we will look no farther. This is the home you have builded, or the Lord has builded for you while you tried to do his work and serve your fellowmen." "I never sought reward, this is too good for me," I said, kneeling and overcome by emotion. "You are indeed my brother in that you do not claim merit, but you must not reject the tokens of the Lord's goodness," said my guide, raising me in his arms. "The Lord delights to make his children happy and only asks in return that you will accept and use his bounties to help and bless others."

I had not time to reply before several relatives and some I had known intimately in the church came in and greeted me with words of welcome and rejoicing. Their appearance confirmed what had been told me about being in the spiritual or heavenly world. Questions were asked about the church in the world and if it is not known that man lives a man after the death of the body.

HE STUMBLES IN DARKNESS BECAUSE OF CONFIRMED FALSE VIEWS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

I said, "The Bible taught us to expect that our bodies would be raised from the grave and we should then be called to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be allotted our place in heaven or hell by Him, and yet you all have bodies, as I too have, and do not need another. This does not seem to be heaven and cannot be hell," I said, glancing around, "though some I see here made no pretensions of being Christians when I knew them and I did not think much of death bed repentance." Then followed a long conversation in which it was explained that most coming from the Christian churches have wrong ideas of what the Bible teaches about this world and the God who governs all things, and that I must be prepared for many surprises and to unlearn much to which I had held and had taught others. I answered, "That I had accepted the Bible as the Word of God and the plan of salvation as there laid down, which is faith in the merits of Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sin whereby man is justified and accepted as righteous and is forgiven and washed and made pure from his sins if he is willing to give up his sins and be saved on these terms; that I had myself sought and experienced the bless-

ing of sanctification and so was prepared to enter into the joys of Heaven." The subject was not further discussed at that time, only I asked, "What did the Bible mean when it said our bodies should be raised out of the grave?" "We need much more to have our conceptions of the character of our Lord and Saviour and the teachings of His Word raised from the grave where they are buried by materialistic thought," was answered. Soon I was left alone to think over what I had seen and been told, and became greatly troubled and perplexed, so that darkness gathered about me and, as I supposed night was coming on I looked about for a place where I could lie down and sleep; for I thought then I might be able to think more clearly and understand things better. I saw a couch upon which I made myself comfortable and soon fell asleep.

HAS A VISION.

When I awoke I fell on my knees and there stood before me a radiant person that I knew must be the Lord Jesus. He told me not to be afraid, that He had the keys of death and hell, and would deliver His faithful servants who trusted in Him from all their enemies; that He had come to assure me of His love and care and that He had all power in heaven and in earth. This filled me with unspeakable joy and peace and I said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do." He told me to follow a light that would lead me to a place where I should receive instruction and be shown the path that would lead me to heaven. When I looked up again, for I had covered my face from the brightness, I saw no one, and going to the door a light, as of a torch appeared at a little distance, and, as I approached moved before me. I followed and soon entered the grounds

about some large buildings, like those of a college or university. As I hesitated about entering, a man of dignified bearing came toward me and asked if I had not been led by a light to this entrance and when I said I had, he grasped my hand and bade me welcome to all the privileges of this school of instruction.

I said, "I did not expect to have to go to school again; I have been a close student of the Bible for many years, especially of the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments and feel myself prepared to give instruction to the ignorant." "You have come where there is a different order of things than those to which you have been accustomed and will need to unlearn many things about which you felt sure and then to begin as a little child to learn the foundation truths upon which all right thought of the Lord and His government depends." "Will you please tell me then," I said, "Where I am to go and what I am to do." "Still follow the light till it rests upon some house you are to enter and there make yourself at home until you receive further instructions." On looking up, the light began to move above a path that led to a cottage like the one I had left to follow it; and within was the same furniture and arrangement, at which I was surprised and pleased. Here I sat down to ponder over all I had seen and heard.

BELIEVES THE BIBLE MISLEADING.

I became more and more perplexed and troubled in spirit when I compared my expectations, founded on what I had considered the plain teaching of the Bible, with my recent experiences.

The latter contradicted the former in every particular, so I said to myself, "There is no use in trying to excuse

or make believe that the Bible does not misstate facts and mislead people. It tells nothing about a world like this and nothing that would lead people to expect a chance to correct their errors and improve their life, for the words were plain—"As a tree falls, so will it lie." Then I thought of the Lord Jesus and how He had appeared to me and used the words that are in the Bible and that all I had known about Him was from its teachings. Still I thought this must have been only a coincidence for the Lord would not give a book to mislead and trouble his children, so as to make them afraid and punish them for their ignorance. When my perplexity had increased to the point of complete despair of reconciling by any method known to me the statements in the Bible with the facts of experience, I cried out in distress, "And yet how can I give up the Bible. It is from that alone that I have learned about the Saviour and been led to turn my face from the world and seek to be fitted for heaven. And yet what is heaven? Where is heaven? I surely have not found it." Then the words, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," came to my mind with a force never before seen in the words. I reviewed my former ideas in regard to the millenium and the promises of the Lord's second coming and realized that they were much like that of the Jews in regard to the expectations of the coming of the Messiah. One thought led to another until I fell on my knees and prayed, "Open thou mine eyes that I may see the true meaning of thy words." "Send some one to teach me how to read the Bible." I had scarcely finished the last sentence, when a slight rap at my door told me of the coming of some one who proved to be the same that had bidden me welcome at my first awakening.

I was conducted to a hall or chapel where were gathered people from different parts of the world, who had recently come into this, and encountered the same difficulties that I had in mind because of the interpretations put upon the Bible by the whole orthodox (or what is so called) Christian world. Here all our perplexities were first voiced and then were explained the conditions that gave rise to these errors. We were taken back to the first condition of things, when the Word was given and the relation of external and internal things understood.

FINALLY HE PERCEIVES HIS IGNORANCE AND IN HUMILITY RECEIVES INSTRUCTION.

I listened in undisguised wonder and delight, but when I reflected upon how I had misunderstood and so misled others I felt deeply humiliated and ashamed and said to one of the instructors, "I am not worthy of this home, or of a place among Christians. I am a sinful, stupid man, and must suffer the penalty of my misleading others. I am not fit to be here among you." But he tenderly embraced me and said, "You are not condemned for what you did in ignorance and sincerity. You are indeed our brother in that you claim no merit for your work of trying to help men to lead lives of devotion to what you and they thought a Christian life required. It is of the Lord's love and bounty that all good comes. He is pleased to have his children enjoy His gifts and use their faculties for the benefit of others who may need what they have to give. We shall be pleased to have you continue with us and since you were led to this place by following the light given to guide you, there be no doubt that it is of the Lord's directing that you

came. When it is His will that you go hence, a door will open and you will see a path that you are to follow." After this I gave myself to unlearning and to learning and the process was slow and difficult, but the confirmations given by beholding the working out of new principles taught and illustrated in the lives about me and their environment, kept me from turning away from what at first was so foreign to all my previous beliefs, which as I said to you in my first conversation, were faulty in every particular.

ENUMERATES SOME FALSITIES OF ORTHODOX TEACHING.

I will enumerate some of my mistakes. First and most important of all was my belief in regard to the Divine Being, wrong. I might say that I really thought of three Gods most distinct, though I, in common with most of the orthodox ministry of my own and other organizations talked of God when we spoke in general terms or in an indefinite manner about the Supreme Being or ruler of the universe, but in regard to the Salvation of man it was different, not only confusing but contradictory of all conceptions of unity, since one person is presented as interceding, even pleading, as though to some superior who had to be placated—His wrath appeased. Fortunately the only definite personality presented to the Christian world by their leaders, has been that of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour, the Redeemer, one upon whom the hopes and affections could be placed, and He, true to His promise, revealed or manifested Himself to humble and contrite hearts and led them despite the blindness of their teachers and in a way they knew not.

The second error is the plan of salvation by faith alone though repentance too was insisted upon. Nor w

faith a true real faith which in its essence is spiritual sight, but rather a blind assent to what the preacher taught. This was not an appeal of truth to the understanding, but rather the submission of the understanding to be led by others who were blind as they. Repentance too, as taught by the church was the surrender, through fear, of what the church told them a Christian life required, most of which were outside things, innocent in themselves as are the plays of children. True repentance is the effort to bring ones faculties into the order for which they were created, which of necessity is a process of gradual growth and development and not an *instantaneous* washing away of sins, as I was taught and preached to others. Also in regard to the life after death the appeal was largely to self interest, the desire to be happy and safe from harm and the fear of the opposite. How puerile, almost degrading are such motives, fit only to restrain the savage in man, not to develop the nobler part of him.

DESCRIBES A PLACE OF INSTRUCTION.

I will now tell something of this place of instruction to which I was led. It is situated on an elevated ground with walls and gates which serve as a protection from intrusion but are no obstruction to the residents who had perfect liberty to go out and in at pleasure. There were large buildings in the center, where were libraries and rooms for lectures, indeed meeting places for many different purposes. About these were residences in quite a variety of architecture and embellishment, though there was no ornamentation that did not serve some use. Around there were gardens and bowers with seats for rest, where the mind could be refreshed by seeing the beauties of the landscape and hearing the songs of birds. Here the students often resorted

after lessons, some for conversation and others for meditation. For a time I preferred to be alone and in my cottage, but later found comfort and exhilaration of spirits in the gardens and mingling among my fellow students. The Word (or Bible) was our text-book. And there were books that gave its spiritual sense, or inner meaning. The more one comprehended of this, the clearer became his vision to see the beauties and evidences of wisdom and love in the universe about him.

I was in this place of instruction for several years of your time. One's habits of thought and the feelings connected with them are not readily or easily changed, especially when confirmed by much study of the literal sense of the Word and formulating thoughts to present to others. But my intentions had not been to deceive and I was gradually delivered from the errors and consequent clouds with which I was for a time encompassed. It is not easy to describe, nor for those living on the natural plane to comprehend the relation of the spiritual man to his environment; how the former is pictured and ultimated in the latter, not only to the sight of the person himself but also to others. This is the way in which rewards and punishments seem to attend good and evil doing, but this in itself is only the appearance. The reality is in the being in harmony with Divine order, or contrary to it, since all happiness is from being in the order for which and in which man was created to live as a recipient of the Divine Love and Wisdom and the agent through which these as one, can operate.

CLOUDS AND DARKNESS DISAPPEAR AND THE DAY DAWNS.

When were gone all my doubts as to the Word, its Divine origin, the nature of its teaching being that of spiritual truth and having its fulfillment, not on the natural plane or in external things, but within man and in the

growth and development of his spiritual nature, not only in time but to eternity, there was opened to my view glimpses of its glory such as had never entered into my mind to conceive and its pages shone with a brightness that dazzled my eyes and I fell on my face in worship and adoration of the Wisdom that I saw was above the full comprehension of a finite mind, as it plainly was the expression of the Infinite Love that thus clothes itself to come within the range of all lower intelligences. From this time my heart was enlarged, and the longing grew to be a light bearer to others, especially the people of my former church and country whom I now saw to be in such darkness about spiritual things and the meaning of the Bible though they thought themselves the favored of the earth, which in many regards they seemed to be. I was eager to do any service to those coming here from thence, and have been permitted to lead some into ways where this light could shine upon them. Still my heart goes out to find the lost and the straying, who turn from the light and seek to make for themselves false lights that only bewilder and lead farther from the path of safety and peace. Since I know that the Divine Love is over all, and the Divine Wisdom guides and rules even those who go astray, I am content; only seeking to do the part given me to see. He has placed me in a home in the second heaven that satisfies every craving, every ideal of harmony and beauty. My wife is with me. She came long after I did. She was gently led to see and love the spiritual sense of the Word while in the natural world. She was given perception of this as she read the Word. Also she had received some instruction from books sent her and from you (the narrator). She was always open to the spirit of truth and so loved the Lord that she was not detained in the intermediate world.

CHAPTER XIX.

The "Narrator" to Florence (her niece) after the death of her daughter Mabel 14 years of age.

July 6, 1911.

My dear Florence:—

When I was holding your letter and thinking of you and of your daughter, Mabel, she spoke to me and her speech was very gentle and sweet yet full of animation and eagerness. You can understand that my earnest thought took me to you, or brought us all together—I do not know how it is—but cannot doubt that for purposes of mercy my presence is sometimes perceived in the spiritual side and I am made conscious of this and can hear, at times, with the inner ear.

After reading your letter two or three times and thinking of you and of her who has entered the "Angel land," I felt a sweet, gentle presence near and in the inner ear heard the following:

Dear Aunt M———:

I am Mabel—just the same that I was before this change came to me. Please tell mama, my dear, dear mama, that I have not gone away. I am still with her. I wish they would not grieve about me, I am feeling so much better than before I was raised into this bright and beautiful world where people are not sick any more. If mama were only here she would not get sick nor feel tired as she so often does. Tell them (the home family) that I love them all just the same. I do so want them to know that I have not gone away; that I am still with them, though they cannot see me. I can see Ethel (her little sister) and sometimes mama—but not all the time. I do not see papa and the boys (her brothers), but I feel they are near.

I have seen Uncle Hubbard and some others who said they are relations of my mother. I have my own room home.

I am not left alone; there is a lovely lady in the house, the one who was with me when I first wakened. She takes me out often and shows me lovely places. I have been with some nice girls about my age who came before I did. I am glad to be here and know all will come some time and we will be happy together though I am not away from them now—tell mama about this. I am here with you (the narrator) and mama is here too.”

(The above was given less than two weeks after Mabel's death and the following several days later.)

My dear, dear Mamma:

I have just read your letter the second time with Aunt M——. Isn't it *good*—isn't it *just lovely* that we can know about each other if we cannot talk as we used to do?*

Sometimes I can hear you speak when you think about me and this world that is all about you—that is, you are as to your mind that thinks, in this world; and that is the *real* you. This is what my friends here tell me. This is the reason I can see you sometimes when your thought is about the Lord and heavenly life—I cannot tell just how it is, but people who love that world and think only about it and the things there, are not seen here. I know papa is not that way; maybe he does not know this world is so near and

*The reader will note the simple, childlike language in these letters dictated by Mabel from the inner world to her aunt, the "Narrator" in the East, who recorded and sent them through the mails to her mother in San Francisco. These letters from Mabel are in answer to letters written to her from her mother and her little sister, Ethel, in San Francisco, conveyed by the mails to her aunt in the East through whose eyes she read them.
ditor.

he is in it. I love him and maybe I can see him after a little while. I do not see Grandma Mohr but I have seen Grandpa once. I have seen my other Grandma's father and mother, and Uncle Luther and Uncle Thomas. They have all been so good to me.

Uncle Hubbard is with me and tells me to say that you may well be glad for me—that since it is the Lord's will that I have come here so young, it is that I may be a blessing to you who are still in that plane of life, and a means of giving joy and help to those who are there and who will come later and that I will do a work no one else could do so well. I think that is true of every one and it makes me happy to think this and makes me love people more. That is the great thing, that we should love people, and then we shall find ways to help them.

Uncle Hubbard says I see Ethel because she does not care so much for the things in that world and she is with the angels as to her spirit.

I love all the friends who came to you when they thought your Mabel was dead. The angels were there and would not let any one be very sad because it is so beautiful to come away from being sick and tired and still not leave those you love. Isn't it beautiful mama?

I can see Aunt M's—— home and her hand as she writes and the trees and grass as she looks out of the window. The houses are closer than where we live. I knew you went away from home and that I could still be with you. The things that are only for the body do not seem of so much interest as they used to and I am now to learn about things in a different way. I cannot tell much of this, only I see and feel that it is so.

I will try to tell what I can recall of the last day I saw you with the eyes of my earth body. I just seemed to gradually fall into a quiet sleep when I did not think about anything nor feel any pain and when I woke up all the bad feelings were gone. A sweet faced lady touched my eyes and wiped my face and talked to me so gently about the Lord's love for His children and His care to provide every thing they need. Then she told me He had not brought me away from my parents and home, but had raised me out of the body of earth, that is, of dead substances, into a better one that would not cause me to suffer. She gently touched my hands and arms, then lifted me up and held me in her arms until I felt I would like to be bathed and dressed. She helped me to do this and then we went into a garden. There were flowers and birds and seats in arbors and there we rested and talked. I did not feel afraid nor troubled. When I thought of my home and of you, we went back into the house and I could see I was still at home with you. This made me feel very glad, for it had seemed the one sad thing when people talked about their friends who had, as they said, died—they were spoken of as "lost" and "departed."

Oh! if they could only see how things are on this side and that people do not go from home and friends unless they wish to! They do *that* in that world and do not grieve, because they think they will see their friends or hear from them. The trouble is with most, Uncle Hubbard says, they know so little about this world and will not believe what the Bible says, or that anybody can know.

How different it is with us—I can sit in your lap and

cuddle in your arms when you sleep; sometimes I sleep beside you and sometimes in my own bed.

When I go to school—as my friends here say I will be—fore very long—I can come home in the evening, or if you should want and call me to come, I, will be with you right away.

Isn't it all lovely? This is our real home; people were not made to stay in that world and no one should be afraid or sad to come here, for it is better in every way.

I feel well and strong and have everything I want. That is all for this time.

I love you mamma and all the family just the same.

Mabel.

(At a later date Mabel says to her mother:)

"I want to tell you again that I am right with you and I cannot bear to see you grieve. I have not started to school yet but am learning something every day. I do not have regular lessons in any one thing but there are many things to learn about. We have our morning songs and plays and then something is given us to do. There are several who work and play with me so that I am not alone. There is some kind person near to answer our questions and suggest what we shall do next. We do not get tired but change from one thing to another and evening comes and we want to sleep as children do in that world. I thank you dear mama for writing to me. When you read the Bible I can be with you. You seem nearer—more in this world—and do not trouble about things then and that your work is not done. You must not feel troubled about any'

because the Lord is everywhere and makes everything come right. Uncle Hubbard says we must trust the Lord for everything and not be anxious—just do the thing He shows us to do and love Him and everybody that He sends to us.

I want papa to know I love him so much. Tell him when he reads the Bible to think of me and I will come and read with him. I love to read about the Lord when He was on the earth and healed people and blessed the children and taught people how they ought to live. That is the way they live in heaven—in love and peace. Heaven is where the Lord is loved and trusted, my teachers tell us, and where everyone tries to make others happy, so we can all have it.

That is all I can say this time. I love you mamma and Ethel and the boys, too."

The following is from Mabel in the spirit land, in answer to a letter from her little sister Ethel, at home in San Francisco.

August 10, 1911.

My dear little sister:

Your letter came to Aunt M—— this afternoon and as Aunt M—— and I are alone this evening she will write for me so you will not have to wait long for an answer. Yes, I see you dear, sometimes, and hear you talk, but not all the time, for I have things to do and people to talk with here and that takes my attention as it used to when I went to school and had my lessons to learn and get things ready for school the next day. But my home is with you just the same as it used to be when I did not know about this world being all about us. I cannot tell you how it is, dear sister, we are in two worlds and do not know it. Heaven is

not away off, it is in us and about us wherever the Lord is. It is the Lord who gives us everything we need, our home and clothes, just as we need them.

We have different kinds of dresses to wear. We wear white most of the time and when we are among the flowers and happy in our songs and plays, our dresses shine. We wear flowers and make wreaths to put on each other's necks and arms. We ride in boats and bathe in the beautiful water. There are lambs and doves in the gardens and in the fields. I do not see the things in that world now, your dolls and money, but I see you because you are in this world as to your spirit, for you have another body called a spiritual body and you will live in that when the earth body dies—rather when your spiritual body is raised out of it into this world. The spiritual body has eyes and ears and feet and hands. I can sing and talk so that people who are with me can hear and talk to me. I will be so happy when we can all be here. The Lord knows when it is best for everybody to come here and we must not want, nor try to come until He brings us. It would be very sad to come here and find no place ready for us and not be ready ourselves.

That is what the earth life is for, my teachers say, a training school for our real home—and our homes here are being built while we learn our lessons and do our work in that world.

I did not stay there to build a house of my own and think and do for myself. I am only a child and must learn and grow to be a woman before I will go to a house of my own.

And so my home is still with those who love

love me and whom I love more than I did before this change came to me.

Your loving sister,

Mabel.

September 8, 1911.

I wish to say to my dear Mamma: I am now attending school some distance from my home with you. The path or way I go seems longer sometimes than at others; this I have found depends upon my state of mind. If I am eager to go and have pleasant companions, the way is short and we are soon there.

It is only when something attracts me elsewhere that I do not feel so anxious to go, for the lessons we have are not tiresome. Indeed we are taught in a most pleasant and attractive way and our teachers are always kind and patient. It is about the *WAY* we are taught that I want to tell you. It is so different from the way I learned before I came here. Everything here is related to life—the life within us. This is pictured before our eyes in many ways. If we think sad thoughts, clouds come over us, real dark ones sometimes, that shut away the sunlight.

If one is selfish and wants to have her own way, her face is so changed that others do not recognize that she is the same and she is left alone. She feels that she is alone for she cannot see anything good and pleasant. There are different ways to help children to overcome these feelings. Remember that we are just the same kind of persons we were in that world, only we have not the same kind of bodies, but we think and feel the same about what is pleasant and what we would like to do. We are taught what is right and useful for us to learn and shown the way to act

and to do things, then we are left free to choose for ourselves whether we will or not—just as people are there.

Things are easy and pleasant for us, and everything is provided without our earning or even asking for it. We are taught to love each other. Our teachers show much love for us and for each other.

We are greeted with smiles in the morning and taught that our Father gives us the sunshine that warms and brightens all about us and gives our own hearts the proof of His presence and His love, and that it please Him that we should be useful and make others happy. After coming together in a large bright room we spend some time in singing and marching, or keeping step to music.

Then we bow in worship, thanking our Father for our happiness.

One thing I wish to say, is, that we are never kept long, or what seems so, at one thing. We have frequent changes and much variety both in clothing and in our occupations, so that we are never dull, the time never seeming long before we have something new.

September 12, 1911.

Dear, dear Mamma, I have read your letter to me through Aunt M—— and want to say in answer that as long as she is in that world I will send you word of any important change that comes to me, for people do not remain long in the same state either here or in the natural world—especially children. Remember always that I love you and will, more and more, as I grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord, for all love is from Him, and the more we become like Him the more love we will give to others. I th:

often of the kindness and care I received from you and papa and will always love you and help you in any way I can. I am often with you dear, dear Mamma and like to cuddle beside you in the evening. We have no dark night, just twilight when we rest and sleep.

I put my arms about you and kiss you when you do not know it.

Your loving

Mabel.

Monday, October 9, 1911.

My dear, dear Mamma:

I will now try to answer some of the questions in your last letter. My life here is not a hurried one, but employment is provided so that no one need be idle. Aunt M——, too, has her work and her letters to write, so that it has not before been convenient for both of us at the same time to attempt a reply—that requires leisure and quiet. I will take pleasure in describing our ways of living, so far as I can find language to describe things that are not seen or known until one comes here. First: I have often been with you when you read the Bible together and alone. I do not see the words, but the ideas in your minds are pictured here. I cannot tell how it is, but when you think about this world and the things that are taught in the Bible—the WORD, it is called here, meaning the Lord's Word, or that it is from the Lord—you come into sight, and there is a sphere about you different from other times. I am told that one living on the natural plane cannot remain long in that sphere and that it is not orderly they should, because they have duties on that plane and one ought to be faithful to them. The

mind, or the spirit, is clothed according to the nature of its knowledges and thoughts, when anyone is seen from this side.

No mamma dear, you are not unclothed; I do not see your clothing very distinctly and have not paid much attention to that. I know that I am with you and feel the warmth of your love about me.

As to our eating, what delights and refreshes the mind also nourishes our bodies. These refreshments or nourishments are taken in through the eyes and ears and nostrils. We do not eat as people do on earth, for we are on a different plane of life.

I think you do know when I speak to you; although you may not hear clearly, you get the impression. The road by which I reach our school is a pleasant one, with gentle slopes and trees and flowers on either side. There are also running brooks and little lakes to be seen and houses not far. Say to dear little sister that I love to see her happy. I want her to learn all she can about this world and how children play and are happy while they learn their lessons and to do useful work. The work is not just the same that is to be done there, because what nourishes and clothes us is given by our Heavenly Father and we do not work to earn them, nor anything for ourselves, like money.

We, too, have gentle animals to play with, but not any that will kill and eat other animals. Little kittens do not do that (the older ones do) so children can play with them.

That is all this time. I love you.

From Mabel.

By Aunt M——.

November 21, 1911.

I would like to say to my dear mamma that no special change has come to me since my last letter was written.

I am still with you at home and my home will be wherever the loved ones of my family may live. Your moving to another house will make no difference to me.

I go to school five days as the children do on earth, then there is a day at home, or for other things, and after that, the happy day or Sabbath, when we rise early and greet the new day with songs of gladness and praise to our loving Father. I cannot tell you how beautiful and bright it is, nor how happy we feel. Everything looks bright and fresh as if it had been made new, and so it is the beginning of a new state of life. We have new clothing for the day, and new joy in our hearts with which to begin the week, and so it is meant to be on earth. That is all this time.

Remember I am with you, so do not have to say—good bye.

From Mabel.

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion,
Shall we behold her face.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

—*Longfellow.*

CHAPTER XX.

From a brother of the "Narrator" who studied law—Took part in Lincoln's campaign—Was captain and provost marshal during the Civil War—Became interested in educational matters—Died in his hotel on the same day he delivered an address at a teachers' Institute—Age 66 years—*Editor.*

I am your brother. We had many things in common while in the natural world, besides the inheritance of our parentage and childhood training. I was the oldest of the family to live, and so can remember further back in our history. I loved my sisters, but was inclined to make myself sport at the expense of their sensitive natures. You were especially sensitive to ridicule in any form and inclined to tears when your feelings were wounded. I remind you of this to impress you with the truth that nothing we have ever known or done is lost in the change called death in that world.

I want now to give a brief account of my religious life. Brought up in the Presbyterian church; instructed in its catechism, and taught to reverence the Bible and the church, I was not so impressible as my sister and not so troubled with doubts about my "election." I grew up in the atmosphere of the church and imbibed the ideas that were taught me. As all were expected to join the church about a certain age, I gave the subject serious thought and decided to be a Christian man and to begin then, while I was in my teens. This I did and tried to live as I thought was right in the eyes of God, of whom I had many false notions—that He was in Three Persons and that the Father must be appeased by the atonement of One who had never sinned. I had also very wrong notions of how the Lord is worshipped, thinking He is angry with those who do not believe in Christ as we did, though they had never heard of Him.

After I began to reason about these things, I saw that there must be some better way to interpret the Scriptures,

and read what I could find in the books of my church, but got little help until I found the Writings of the Church of the New Jerusalem, when past middle life. These gave me the light that saved me from rejecting the Bible as a Divine revelation and made life seem worth living. I had before this given up the orthodox beliefs and was immersed in business, hoping by living a true life to attain some degree of happiness hereafter.

Of conflicts and disappointments and sorrows it is not useful to speak, only in a general way. I had my share of these, and found my only comfort in turning my mind to the blessed hopes inspired by reading the Word and the Writings of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

I will give you my experience in the intermediate world, which is described in the work on "Heaven and Hell." My entrance into this world was very unexpected. There was no warning of the change, except a few minutes before I fell asleep, I remember to have thought that my time may have come, and I was not afraid to go, though I had not arranged my business as I would like to have done.

Then I fell asleep and awakened in a room like that I had often occupied in hotels—comfortable and bright—but with the feeling that I had made some change since I fell asleep. On looking up I saw that my friend, whom I had heard had died a few years before was looking at me and smiling.

I said, "How is this Mr. H——? I heard that you had died some time ago, and yet I cannot be mistaken in thinking I see you."

He said "No, I am glad to be the first to welcome you to the better world, where no disease can torture our bodies, nor death invade our homes."

I said, "We must not expect that in this world; there is no one free from some calamity;" for I thought he must be insane. So I hastily rose from my couch and asked if the proprietor of the hotel was in his office. "If so, please ask him to come to my room."

He smiled again and said, "I must inform you that you are not in a hotel, but in the house you have builded for your home while you were in the natural world."

I said, "Am I not still in the natural world? Can it be possible that I am dead as to that world? I thought there must be more change in my feelings, if I were in the spiritual world."

He replied, "You are certainly raised out of the natural body and in the spiritual world."

Then I said, "Oh, if I could only speak to my wife and son I would be content! Now there will be nothing done as I had intended."

Mr. H—— comforted me, saying, "The Lord will provide, and you must not grieve. There is nothing permitted that cannot result in good. So this must be all for the best."

I wept much and prayed that I might be resigned and that the Lord would in some way make matters right. That has not been done as I desired and hoped, but in the end I can see that it is best that I came as I did. There was a judgment accomplished and my wishes in the end will be granted—not in my way, but in a better way.

I was after some time enabled to trust all to the Lord. Soon other friends came to see me. Father and mother were among the first, and they comforted me, saying they had found that the Lord makes no mistakes about any one's coming into this world but that all things are foreseen and provided for with precision and in the best way. I had not thought much about what it was to die out of the natural world, as to the change for myself, I expected to live many years and read more and make myself useful in the church after I gave up business.

I soon found that what the writings of the church of the New Jerusalem teach about death and the intermediate world is strictly true; and I waited for the changes that would bring me to my home without fear or dread. They came in an orderly way, or ways that were not expected.

THE BOOK OF LIFE IS OPENED AND THE JUDGMENT BEGINS

First, I was left alone after my friends had departed, and my life passed in review before my mind in contrast with the Lord's example in the world. The selfishness of my life appalled me. I had tried to be honest and fair in business, and had not stinted my family nor oppressed my hired helpers, nor taken advantage of the necessities of others. I had scattered the truths of the church as I saw opportunity, and still I had not regarded the needs of my neighbors as my own, when these neighbors were not my kind of people. Their misfortunes, growing out of ignorance and misconduct were regarded with indifference, and their persons with aversion. I had loved my friends and hated evil-doers, not separating the person from the evil doing, as did the Lord in His love for our salvation, enduring and overcoming evil from this love. I had to see and condemn this in myself before I could be freed from the darkness that came over my spirit. I did not excuse myself, and after awhile prayed to the Lord to show me what He would have me to do. He sent an angel I had not seen before but who proved to be my own brother, who had died in infancy and had grown up in heaven, and he directed me to go to a certain place where every one is shown the way of his duty. He led me to the door and said aloud, "Here is a man who wants to be shown his place and work in this world." I looked at him and said, "Have I not seen you before?"

He smiled and replied, "We are brothers; but I have long been in heaven. I did not live to grow up in the natural world, and I have been sent to assist you in finding your home in heaven, too. You must first pass through some trials in this intermediate world; but from your wish to be shown the Lord's will, I know your home is in heaven."

He then left me and I was introduced as an inquirer, and led step by step to change many of my notions and

study the methods angels use in helping the lowest and meanest of my race.

HE IS GIVEN WORK

When I had been in this place long enough to practice what I had learned, I was sent to the limits of this intermediate world, near the confines of hell, and given work among the most degraded that come from the natural world. I did not shrink from anything that could help a human being, and many were people I had known in the natural world.

I soon found that man is not judged by his externals. There were many who had lived outwardly orderly lives, who became like wild beasts when all external restraints were removed. There were others who had been immoral even to the extent of crime, that soon showed signs of desiring to mend their lives. Some were in their internals like infants as to intelligence and had to be taught the use of their hands and feet. Some were blind in the light of heaven, but could see when that light was obscure, like owls, they hid from the light of day.

I continued in this work for more than a year of your time, until I was brought to see that the Lord's mercy is infinite, and that there is no limit to His love of saving the lost. I entered more and more into this love of mankind and was happy in proportion; and after serving in this place until I was thoroughly cured of all *class distinctions*, I was made leader of a society where instruction was needed in the general principles of the Divine government, as unfolded in the "True Christian Religion." I continued in that position for more than a year of earth time, until the beginning of the present year, and until my home in the second plane of the spiritual heaven was ready to receive me. Here my work is a continuation of my last work in the intermediate world, only it is enlarged and more satisfying, and my home is all I can desire, and will enlarge when my wife shares it with me.

Voices from the Open Door

VOLUME ONE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

NUMBER TEN

CHAPTER XXI.

The message in this chapter is from Prof. Hubbard Fish, brother of Eben Fish, the publisher.

Heretofore the real names of persons from whom the messages came have been suppressed out of respect to the feelings and possible objections of their friends; but in this booklet that consideration has no force and the real names are given.

The following obituary was written by Rev. N. Hawley of the M. E. Church and was published in the Western Christian Advocate in 1864 forty-one years before this message was given.—Editor.

Copied from The Western Christian Advocate, October, 1864.

MEMOIR.

Died in Olney, Ill., Oct. 3, 1864, Prof. Hubbard Fish, President of Olney Male and Female College, aged thirty-four years.

He was naturally thoughtful studious and susceptible of religious impressions. He became a subject of saving grace early in life and united with the M. E. Church. His conversion was so clear as not to admit of a doubt and his conduct was ever afterwards remarkably exemplary. In his youth he was guilty of none of the follies and irregularities so common to young

men. During an entire university and academic course, he never once engaged in anything rough, coarse, unbecoming or disorderly, for he seemed to have a natural affinity for all that is truly noble and excellent in character and conduct. He possessed an ardent thirst for knowledge and was never happy when denied its pursuit. His books were his companions, the cultivation of his mind and the study of the Word and works of God his delight. He would say to those around him, "How can you be so careful about these things in which you are engaged, while you are contented to let the great garden of the mind go uncultivated?" Wherever he went his influence was elevating and his example holy. His motto was, "Be sure you are right and go ahead."

Though exceedingly modest and retiring, he possessed remarkable perseverance and decision of character. After struggling through obstacles and discouragements that would have overcome a less determined spirit, he completed the classical course at the Ohio Wesleyan University, in his 28th year. From that time until his death he engaged in the work of teaching, in which he labored with unremitting zeal and for which he seemed remarkably fitted both by nature and education. He always strove to teach morality and religion, as well as literature, and to awaken high aspiration and cherish noble sentiments in the minds of his students. He considered the cultivation of the immortal mind a high calling and one that required much preparation. He thought and read much on this subject and considered his a sacred trust.

His illness was brief, but at times painful. During the whole period of his confinement to his bed, he evinced truly the spirit of his Lord and Master. Instead of complaint, thanksgiving expressed his emotions. The day before his death, he talked much of the preciousness of the promises of the gospel.

When it was announced to him that he would probably not recover, he received the intelligence without a change of countenance; said he dreaded the pain of separation, but that was all. During the seven hours more of time that were allotted

to him, his mind was calm, peaceful and stayed on God. He often exclaimed, "Bless the Lord!" and, "The Lord is good to us!"

A short time before his death he asked the subscriber to lead in prayer. This prayer seemed to afford him much enjoyment and consolation and he responded to most of the petitions. His friends around him sang three verses of "Jesus, Lover of my soul."

After this he remained silent a moment, then said with emphasis, "Bless the Lord!" asked to be turned over, and in a moment breathed his last. Thus he fell asleep in Jesus.

N. Hawley.

I am glad of the opportunity to speak to you my brother.

I see you when my amanuensis turns her eyes toward you.

Question—Do you know who she is?

Yes, it is Sister M——. I remember her very well and the memory is a pleasant one.

Question—Is it not marvelous that we should meet and converse in this way?

I am not acquainted with all the ways by which the Lord has led any one, but I know His plans are wise and good.

Question—Did you find things as you expected in that world?

I am a great deal happier than I was in the natural world. I was not surprised when told I had died to that world and was in the world of spirits, though many things were different from the way I had been taught to expect. I was surprised that I had a body with all the members and organs that belong to perfect manhood.

I was also surprised that I was in a real world, where people live much as I had seen them in the natural world.

There is a sun that gives light and warmth. There is a moon also, though it is not related as the moon of your world is to your sun. The moon is for light to those who cannot see the sun. There are trees and flowers and hills and mountains and waters in various forms, as you have there; but these things are not like those you see; and my experience leads me to think you cannot understand the difference until you come into this world as a resident.

I was most kindly received when I awakened and was made to feel welcome and at home, by an angel who was standing by me when I opened my eyes. He looked like a man, only his face beamed with kindness, and my heart responded when he bade me welcome to the land of my hopes and desires. He addressed me as brother and said he was glad to welcome me home. I asked him how he knew me and he said he had loved me when I was struggling to make my way to heaven; that he had been my guardian angel for years and my coming was not unexpected. I was much affected by this information.

THE HOME COMING.

I was at once taken to a house he said I had builded while in the natural world. I was delighted with my house and the surrounding fields; everything I could want was furnished me and I was much at home in it. My Aunt E. and my grandmother soon came to greet me in my new home. I made inquiry in regard to my grandfather and was told he would soon let all my friends know of my coming and then he would come to my house with them. I was surprised that he knew of my coming, and was told that all the friends were interested in this way when one of the

family arrives from the natural world. I was about to express my pleasure, when they all came and wished me good morning. My grandfather looked like a man of twenty-five years. My grandmother was like a maiden of less age. They were good people, and in this world to grow old is to become young again. I was delighted with this news and was glad that such destiny awaits all who follow the laws of the Lord, though in blindness and much stumbling.

I found that much I had been taught needed correction; that God is not in Three Persons, but in one glorious Manhood, in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. He is not worshipped with organs and prayers, but in loving works of kindness to those who have need of kindness. I found that angels are men and women who had lived and struggled against temptation in the natural world; that there are three heavens, one interior to the other.

Remark—You mean they are not in different places, but in different states?

They *appear* to be in different places. They are separated by the states of the inhabitants. They are like a world within a world, yet most distinct from each other. My home is in the middle heaven, where are those who loved the truth more than they loved worldly things.

When I was in the natural world I loved the truth more than money. I loved the Lord more than I did the world. I loved mankind more than position or power. From boyhood I wished to preach the gospel and now I am employed in that way. I love to let all know the great truths revealed by the Lord in His Second Coming by the opening of the

spiritual sense of His Holy Word. I gathered in the spiritual world a company who were willing to learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is God of heaven and earth.

Question—Do you preach in the intermediate world?

No, there must be preaching in heaven also, that people may grow in knowledge and the life of love. I began first in the world of spirits and my people came with me to this happy place, where all we had hoped is realized. I married my wife in the intermediate world, after she had been there some time. We came together to our home in heaven.

Question—Were you long in the Intermediate world?

I was there about ten years of your time. I had much to learn and much to unlearn. I made the acquaintance of some books that made my studies easier than they would have been with only angel teachers. These books have been given to the world and I trust you have found them, or you would not be prepared to understand much that I have to tell you. They are called "The Writings for the Church of the New Jerusalem." They describe the world of spirits better than I can. They tell about heaven and how to get into it. They tell the internal sense of the Word of the Lord. I think you must have them—both of you—or we could not meet and converse almost face to face. I wonder how you found them.

Remarks—Explanations were give and he was told that he could learn more about this from our friends in the spiritual world.

I would like very much to meet them. I will call for them when I can. I remember Matilda—our niece in the spiritual world—spoke of a man who came to her when she

was in great trouble and said he was a relative of mine by marriage. I found Matilda when my brother Charles told me she needed help. We can only help her by calling upon some one who is nearer her plane of life, because we are not able to convince her from our standpoint that her troubles are curable. She thinks we cannot understand her mistakes.

Question—Could those more recently from this earth get nearer to her?

If they have like experiences which we have not. We are all in the New Heaven, which is composed of three planes. I am in the second, as I told you. The rest are in the middle plane of the natural heaven, where most from our Christian churches are gathered.

It is a beautiful and happy place, where many persons find employment as teachers and instruction is given to children who are preparing for heaven by their experiences in the world of spirits before the higher life is possible to them. It is the place to practice love toward mankind, without much knowledge of truth.

Question—Why are most from the Christian churches in the natural heaven?

Many are there because they were not willing to study the Word of the Lord and find reasons for what He had commanded, but were willing to be led by others in the ways of right living. Many are there, because, like a man born blind, they do not care for the light and think it is better not to take the trouble to be cured. All are in the most useful place for them and so in the happiest place.

They will grow and become more happy forever, and that is all any one can wish.

* *Question—How is the church—the Holy City—the New Jerusalem spoken of in the 21st and 22d chapters of Revelation going to descend or appear on this earth?*

All through my life and since I have been in the spiritual world, I have found that the safe thing to do was to hold myself ready to obey the light of truth when it first appeared. I heard you (Brother Eben) say that you are not convinced that the New Jerusalem Church is not to come in all the churches, and that this is to be the way that church is to be manifested and not by any *distinct organization*. You admit it is through this distinct organization that the light is to be given to other organizations; that they are the dispensers of the light that has come from heaven to illuminate the Christian churches. We understand, then, that you acknowledge that *this* is a real light given by the Lord to correct the false notions that have become common in the churches. That all may see this, it is necessary that some who are called *heretics* should have the bravery and unselfishness to bear the reproach that will follow upon every departure from beaten paths. The rest of those who enjoy this privilege of seeing new light can still unselfishly sit in their pews and hold the popular applause when the laws of the universe are reversed. When a cause is unpopular and its friends few is the time to try the souls of men.

When all men become true to the light given them, then indeed will the New Jerusalem church be established in all the churches; but until that time comes, it must remain among the few and those not always wise in regard to

methods. *The New Jerusalem is the acknowledgment of the Lord's Divine Humanity as the corner stone upon which the church is founded; and that the WORD is Divine Truth and treats of the Lord and heavenly life. Where there is this acknowledgment THERE is the Church of the New Jerusalem. Without it there can be no conjunction with heaven.* It is not true that this acknowledgment is now coming into the churches of Christendom. There is a tendency to deny even what was held when I was associated with the church on earth. There are some who get the truth in spite of their teachers, but a thick darkness covers the most of the world. And the few who carry the light are feeble and faint hearted when compared with those who flee away when its sacred banner is unfurled.

GIVES A BENEDICTION AND POINTS TO THE TRUE
SOURCE OF WISDOM.

My brother, my wish is that you may have many years of happiness in your earth life and be prepared for heavenly happiness when you are set free from the bondage of material things.

I myself am your brother. I was mistaken about things in the natural world which you have the means of correcting while you are in that world. I had to learn in the intermediate world what you have learned, and my stay there was because I was not instructed in the spiritual sense of the Word. I made myself do whatever I was told by my teachers the laws of order required. At first I did not always see the reason for obeying these laws but later acceded to

them, as I was led into more light. I was told that all are enrolled according to their affection for truth and good.

WISHED TO ENROLL AS A METHODIST.

Upon my first entrance into the world of spirits, my desire was to be enrolled among the Methodist societies who called me "brother," and claimed that I was of their faith. I wished to live among them and was permitted to make my home among my own people. I was at first greatly pleased with all I saw. But when we met to worship the Lord, all that I could see was a confused mass of men and women who turned in every direction when told that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only God of heaven and earth. Some were glad and looked up at the sun above their faces and made thankful exclamations of joy. Others asked, "Where are the Father and the Holy Spirit? There are three Persons in the Godhead and we want to see them all." The rest admitted that the church had taught them that there is but one God with three manifestations, and they wanted to know how these three manifested themselves. There was no harmony in their thought and their speech—as like a babel as one can imagine. I was bewildered and like a man having his eyesight blurred by being first dazzled by light and then blinded by darkness.

An angel came into the assembly and announced "All in heaven worship one God and you will now take your places according to your thought of the Divine Being." Then he left, and one of the preachers arose and said, "My friends, we have been instructed that God is One. We are to decide who is that One God. I myself believe that He is

not to be seen by mortal eye, but that He is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ and I will worship Him alone."

I was glad to hear that and immediately joined myself to his side of the question; but another said, "My faith tells me that there are three Persons in the Godhead, and I will not believe *all* is in Jesus, and that the Father and Holy Spirit are not to be worshipped as much as Jesus is."

Another said, "God has manifested Himself in three ways. I want to see these Manifestations manifest themselves, or I will think the Bible is not to be relied upon as telling who is the One to be worshipped. We have already found that it did not tell us truly about the resurrection, and my opinion is that we will have to find another guide before we can decide this question as to whom we are to pray."

I was shocked beyond measure and turning to the first speaker, said, "This is not my idea of a Methodist assembly. I thought all would be glad to learn that Jesus is the only object of worship; but this assembly is divided as to who is the Divine Being. I myself will not give up the Bible, which I believe to be true, but we have not understood how to read it."

He replied, "That is my sentiment; let us call for a decision from the majority."

He announced that as there was some uncertainty with regard to the opinion that had been expressed by himself and friend, he would like to have an expression of the men and women individually, and said, "All who endorse what I have said will rise to their feet."

I was amazed to find that my friend and myself were the only ones that rose and that most were bewildered and

did not know their own minds, but looked to the preachers to tell them what to do.

I am much concerned about all that know that Jesus is God and live among those who have no definite thought as to the object of worship. When they come into this world, it is not easy for them to separate themselves from the other spirits who claim them as belonging to their faith. I was only set free when the assembly was dismissed by an angel with a flaming countenance making his appearance and announcing, "All who acknowledged more Gods than One will now make room by withdrawing." Then we were left with my friend and myself and a number of women, who said, "We love Jesus and are glad He is the only God. We do not want any other God but Him."

That was only one assembly, and many of these came back when they had prayed about the matter and thought more independently of the preachers.

Question—Did the preachers come back?

Answer—No.

The angels instructed us that God is One in essence and in person; that His Humanity was made Divine and one with the Father who dwelt within.

I was glad in my heart and ready to be taught all that the angel said, but still the old ideas clung to my external mind, and I could come into the thought of one, only as I was freed from former associations.

I continued in this mixed state until removed to a society where there were none that believed in more than One God in one Divine Person; and then my love and thought were centered and I was at peace. I wanted to learn the laws of this world and set myself to earnest study; and when my

judgment was past, I was transferred to a school where I was prepared to teach in the second heaven, where all my anticipations of happiness are more than realized.

I have only one thing more to say. Be sure to make no mistake in clinging to those who are not in sympathy with your highest conceptions of God's truth, and live for heaven, not for earth.

I love you all and will rejoice when your trial time is over, if you are true to your opportunities.

ANGELIC WISDOM CONCERNING VARIOUS SUBJECTS FROM HUBBARD FISH.

CONCERNING GUARDIAN ANGELS.

There are angels whose office it is to attend and protect little children. These angels are from the highest heaven and continue with a child until his actual heredity begins to assert itself. Then an angel from the second heaven is appointed to be the guardian while the child is in states of innocence and has not made evil his own by adopting it after his reason tells him better. If he makes evil choices, an angel from the natural heaven, who is also an angel with more like kingly authority is placed over the young person and reproves him when he goes against his conscience. This continues until the youth either reforms or becomes hardened in evil. If he reforms, he is led by angels from all the heavens, as he accepts their added wisdom to what has been stored in his childhood. There is no specially appointed guardian, but the person attracts his attendant angels by the life he lives; and the one who is at the tim

the guardian angel knows all about the interior life of the person and can foresee the result in his ministering efforts, if the person does not resist his influence. My experience will not justify me in saying that evil spirits are appointed by the Lord to attend upon any one; but every one attracts the kind of spirits who are in similar loves; and the appointed angel defends from evil spirits with all the power he can get from the truth in the mind of his charge. All their power is in the truth one holds in his memory. If one does not know truth, he has nothing that angels can take hold of. If he does not obey truth, it turns against him in making his state more desperate than the state of those who do not know the truth. I tremble to contemplate the results of knowing and not acknowledging and obeying the Lord's revealed truth. It appears a small thing to the natural man, but to the spiritual man it is treason and profanation. I would, my brother, you could see how these things appear in the light of the Lord's Word. He said, "Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of such they will ask the more."

CONCERNING ANGEL MINISTRATIONS.

I wish to impress the great truth that angels minister to all in the natural world according to their *reception of the love of use and love of the neighbor*. The exercise of these two loves makes a plane into which they can act and prepare a place for the higher love of spiritual good and truth in which dwells the love of the Lord, and a perception of His love in the redemption of the world by means of His Glorified Humanity.

USE INVITES INFLUX FROM HEAVEN.

It is into the plane of use that this perception can come, therefore those who love idleness and their own pleasure more than use, are cut off or remove themselves from the possibility of receiving any direct influx from heavenly societies and are adjoined to infernal societies where uses are performed under compulsion.

TELLS IN WHAT THE HAPPINESS OF ANGELIC LIFE CONSISTS.

The happiness of angelic life is in the perception that no evil and no suffering is permitted to come to any one unless there is in it not only the possibility, but the absolute certainty of its being used by the Infinite Love, whose wisdom and power are without limit, to bring a compensating good.

Unless this were so there could be no heaven of happy beings for true happiness can come to intelligent moral beings from no other source than the heart-felt acquiescence in every thing of the Divine order and government.

This must be apparent to every thinking mind from what is said about the joy of angels over one sinner that repenteth being more than over ninety and nine who need no repentance—Also it is confirmed by the declaration in regard to the celestial love of angels—that “To save a soul from hell they make no account of death; yea, if it was in their power they would endure hell for such a soul.”

This love to the minutest particular is from the Lord.
A. C. 2077.

GOOD THOUGHTS CONCERNING OTHERS BRING ABOUT THEM A SPHERE OF HELPFULNESS.

The greatest help one person can be to another is to hold about him the thought of the *absolute rightness* of all things.

Thought brings presence and presence carries its own sphere. Intelligent conviction has always a sphere of assurance and protection. This can operate independent of time and space. This sphere is in harmony with angelic spheres—like attracts like and heaven comes down to dwell with men.

CONCERNING SPECIAL PROVIDENCES

All providences are special. It is a law of all nature that generals are made up of particulars. There could be no general control without attention to specialties. It is not possible that this law will be abrogated in the government of a man's spiritual and eternal life. This involves also the government of the particulars of his natural life.

The Lord is immediately present in man, in every man, and sustains and guards and guides, striving to bring the external into order. What cannot be brought into harmony becomes as nothing.

THOUGHTS CONNECT WITH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD ACCORDING TO THEIR QUALITY.

Thoughts connect you with the spiritual world according to the motives from which they originate. If there is no definite purpose controlling the life the thoughts will be vague, especially on spiritual subjects. If the aims are confined to the things of the natural world and the natural life the thoughts will appear in the spiritual world as heavy

clouds obscuring the light of the sun of heaven and creating a sphere of uncleanness that attracts the spirits who have lived in evil; and so they inflow and excite in men cupidities and lusts that ultimate themselves in the eager and unlawful desires to amass wealth; and drown out the good affections that are inspired by angels who dwell in the things of charity and brotherly love. From this evil sphere that now enshrouds our beloved land, originate the covetousness, the restlessness and the consequent inequalities for advancement in material and social ways, the disasters, sickness and suffering in general. To be delivered altogether out of these conditions during life in the body is impossible at the present. Nor could regeneration be effected by withdrawing from association with those who are now immersed in these worldly aims but by living in the world and shunning its evils, by looking to the Lord and seeking to be guided by His revealed truth.

THE STATES OF CHRISTENDOM VERSUS HEATHENDOM.

The thoughts of the people, including the churches of Christendom, are more gross than those of other lands for there is more eagerness to grasp and find pleasure in material good than is the case in Mohammedan and Heathen countries. Still the opportunities in the latter to acquire spiritual riches are not to be compared to those in Christian lands. The spiritual development of those who follow this light is above all price. When they come into the spiritual world, they rise at once into the light of heaven and soon become angels of mercy to the rest of mankind.

CHRISTIAN AND BENEVOLENT ORGANIZATIONS CHANNELS FOR ANGELIC INFLUX.

What I said about the sphere of Christendom relates to the general sphere.

Within this and permeating it with streaks of light are many individual and social spheres. Each organized effort that looks to the bettering of these evil conditions, if the motive be heavenly, is not without good results, even if the methods are mistaken or impracticable, because it creates a channel into which angelic spheres may flow.

Each different organization or church, as they are called in the world, has its general sphere that connects with a like body in the spiritual world. Within these are the individual spheres originating in the life's love of each and connecting each with his like in the spiritual world.

These latter are constantly changing their relations during the progress of regeneration and the rapidity with which these changes are made has been constantly increasing. This accounts for the restlessness in the natural world and it will continue to increase until heaven and earth come into harmony.

EVIL AND VAIN THOUGHTS REJECTED CREATE NO EVIL SPHERE.

If, when a thought is obtruded upon one's consciousness that is perceived to be evil or leading to evil—if it is not in harmony with the purpose by which one desires his life to be controlled and it is dismissed as vain or unprofitable and the attention turned to the contemplation of subjects that prepare for useful living, the spirits who suggested

these thoughts that have been rejected, are not able to approach and thus protection is provided.

Thoughts project themselves if they proceed from love. If not they are not detained and do not form a sphere about which other spheres may concentrate.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHT CONNECTS WITH ANGELIC SOCIETIES.

The spheres of angelic societies are attracted, or rather they are made operative by thinking of God's love and providence and by desiring with all the heart to come into harmony with the laws of the Divine order and by making things of the natural world serve the uses of spiritual life.

ACTIVITY OF ANGELS.

The great activity of angelic life is one feature to which I wish to call attention. There is no laxity in their efforts to find ways in which they may search out and bring help to needy ones who have not found the shelter and light of heaven. To come into this order must be the constant effort of all on earth who aspire to communion with the angels.

USES OF SORROWS AND CONFLICTS.

All that befalls a man in the natural world is either the result of his own folly, or the indirect influence of his heredity that has brought about conditions that in many cases seem adverse to the happiness and growth of man in the orderly ways of a true life.

But this is only an appearance. There are reasons behind this seeming inharmony that make these circumstances the most useful in developing the qualities that minister to

the growth of the angel within. The growth of the selfhood has to be kept in check that the angel may have a chance to draw breath and the heaven of his mind be moulded into a world of living forms that vibrate in unison with the Lord's heaven of angels. To effect this, man must come into conflict in his natural mind. This may last throughout his life in the natural world or not, as the planes in him are opened successively. If only the first of these is opened he may rest in that state and never come into real spiritual temptations at all. But if he loves spiritual truth and endeavors to live by its teachings, the warfare must begin and continue until truth triumphs over the infernal desires to rule and to possess which are the controlling motives that govern the unregenerate mind.

The only release from the conflict is by resigning all that opposes the Lord's Divine rule. When this is done no matter how the external may suffer, the internal man is at rest.

SUFFERING NOT FROM THE LORD YET REMEDIAL.

The Lord does not inflict suffering. On the contrary His yoke is easy and His burden light, but the man who is regenerating must not shrink from the baptism He was baptized with and this is no light matter. To some it comes with little of outward suffering in the way of what is called misfortunes—but the most of mankind, in this age, must have their hold on the natural world in some way broken in order to develop a desire for the life promised by the Lord to those who seek it. When any trial to the affections is severe, be sure it is because these affections, in part at least, are rooted in self love. The love of good alone is

not capable of suffering since it is from the Lord, and His love received keeps the mind in peace because in it is assurance of protection and blessing, no difference how great the trial to the natural feelings.

THE LORD'S SEEMING ABSENCE DURING TRIAL AND TEMPTATION

While passing through states of trial, the mind is not clear and the Lord's presence seems withdrawn but this is that man may as of himself choose to be guided by the Lord's will and so hold fast the truth he had seen in brighter days. If he does this to the end he becomes a victor and inherits the promises.

In states of obscurity and temptation, a man in all sincerity should examine his life of both outward acts and the intentions of his will and put away whatever stands in the way of his complete surrender to the highest perceptions given him at this time. Not that he should bemoan the past—that is beyond his control—only he must not cling to what he sees is not in harmony with what the Divine law requires, which is that the Lord should be acknowledged in every act of life. Obedience must follow as light is given. Then rest in the Lord's love and wait His revealing.

THE LOWER NATURE IN MAN SHOULD SUBSERVE THE HIGHER.

Let no one excuse in himself or in another any departure from the law that requires the subjugation of the external to the internal in man as announced in the Word by the Lord "If thy hand offend thee cut it off" etc. Mark 9:43-48.

The Lord is immediately present with every man and in the struggle to bring the whole of him into heavenly order, the order for which he was created. Any excuse for evil doing is a denial of this most vital truth.

The same rule applies to many things that are called weaknesses and infirmities of temper and disposition—yielding to indolence or any allurements of passion or appetite that tends to give the lower nature predominance or rule over the higher, the sensual over the rational and spiritual in man. Every effort that is made to develop the rational plane and make the sensual to serve it is a step toward the building of a *truly human* life, since these must form the foundation upon which spiritual character must rest.

Every teacher of youth is performing an important and orderly use in so far as instruction in natural knowledge is made a stepping stone to point to something higher.

THE MORNING COMETH.

I have heard the cry on the earth for better conditions, for mitigation of the evils that make life hard for a great many people. * * * * These disorderly conditions must be remedied slowly, *but it is surely coming.* "Behold I make all things new" is being fulfilled in the world of causes and the effects will be evident on the earth as fast as men in freedom can be prepared to ultimate their highest perceptions in the acknowledgment of the brotherhood of the race that entitles all to equal privileges in sharing the bounty of the common Father.

The Lord's temple is the human heart and if this is in the order that exists in heaven the Word unfolded in its

spiritual sense will attract all who are in a state to receive the internal truths of this Word.

The temple of the Lord is the Divine Human in which He is present with men in this sense.

His temple is also the human race which He is ever in the effort to save. Therefore instruction from the Word is what brings the Lord's presence into the conscious perception of the man of the church and stirs the affections in which there is conjunction that makes the church on earth one with the church in heaven.

What else can constitute the inner life of a Christian but the conscious presence of the Lord? Are we not assured in the Word that there is this experience for every one who longs for it and will make the sincere effort to live the truth taught—that the Lord must be acknowledged in every act of life and the love of the neighbor must come before the love of the world?

We are taught in the writings for the church that the angels dwell in peace and in love because they have the constant perception of the Lord's love and protection. They have no regret for the past nor fear for the future because they perceive that in the past He has led them to heaven in ways that were kind and wise and only permitted evils that in the end were turned into blessings.

They also perceive that nothing is too small to escape the Divine notice and form a link in the chain that binds the soul to its source. That the Lord's presence is alike in everything great and small is clearly stated in His revelations

CHAPTER XXII.

Charles Fish, brother of the publisher, was noted for his sterling sincerity and honesty of purpose. He was religious, but too honest to profess what he did not believe, so he never joined any church. He led an upright, clean life; was always ambitious to make the most of himself and others. He nearly completed a course of study in a Methodist college in Wisconsin, but leaving for lack of funds he taught select and high schools in Kentucky, Kansas City and Illinois. He was fond of music and at times taught both vocal and instrumental, in which he was engaged when called to the other life. His business as teacher of female schools and of music brought him much into the society of the other sex. He seemed to enjoy their company and to respect and admire them; but he never betrayed any special attachment and was never married in this world. In his last moments on earth he seemed to have an open vision of the spirit world and asked if we did not see the angels hovering about his bed.

He passed over on June 27, 1874, aged forty-seven years, about thirty-one years before this conversation with him as to his experiences in heaven. This series of answers to questions from his brother, Eben, were received and reported by the "Narrator" while she was a guest in the Fish home in Cleveland, Ohio, in the summer of 1905.—Editor.

June 15, 1905.

I am Charles Fish, your brother who has been many years in the spiritual world. What has come to you, my brother, that you thought I could converse with you since you are still in the natural world? I wonder how you came to think that I could speak so that I could make you know I am alive and hear when you are talking about spiritual truths.

Those whose thoughts are about spiritual things are my brothers and sisters in a sense you cannot understand. Your thoughts penetrate into this world and attract those

who love truth for its own sake. I myself have felt this many times. I have heard you Brother Eben when you have made yourself visible in the spiritual world, by the study of the Word.

Question—Do you recall all that occurred in the natural world?

I remember all that occurred when we were teaching together in the south and in Kansas City and when we were at home on the farm. I do not dwell in those memories, but they can all be recalled when there is an occasion that makes it useful. I might dwell upon the past, but it is more useful to tell you what has befallen me since I left the world of nature.

I was not surprised when I was told that I was in the world of spirits. I made myself acquainted with what I could learn before I was called here, through my Bible and the wisdom of my teachers in the Sabbath school. I had made myself acquainted with the thought that God is One; that Jesus Christ was God manifest; and learned from His teachings opinions that were much different from those I heard in the churches. All the essential and fundamental truths of religion I learned from the Lord's Word.

Question—While in the natural world?

Yes, I myself could not have learned these things, but the Lord gave my mother to see that she had not been taught the truth about God, and she told me not to believe that my soul depended on what the churches taught. She told me she loved Jesus and that He had shown her He was the one to be worshipped. She had been taught that God was angry and would punish her for what she did when she was a little child. She told me to pray to Jesus and

He would show me a better way. I loved her then and we have been much together in this world of joy and peace.

I would like to tell you about how happy she was when she came here, to find my brother Calvin, and me, and my sister Julia, all waiting to welcome her, and we rejoiced together that she was free from her infirmities. My father came afterward and we also welcomed him. My sister Julia, was among the first to welcome my mother. They are in the same heaven, where I also have a home.

My own wife is with me. I loved her when we were there, but never told her so. I loved her so much that I never made the acquaintance of any ladies with marriage in view.

I am now living in the new heaven where all love the Lord Jesus Christ, and my desire is to see you when you come into the spiritual world, and that you may have a home here also. My desire is that you will lead many to learn that Jesus is Lord of all. My desire is that you will not make any contract with the preachers to do your thinking for you for their teachings are often misleading. They think they are wise and able to instruct others. I myself am teaching my pupils better than I was taught there.

Question—Are you teaching music also?

Yes, I have my schools of music and my school of instruction for boys about to enter life in the spiritual world. The children who come here are taught by angel mothers until they begin to ask questions about problems in the life of man in the natural world. They are then sent in classes to masters, who instruct them and send them into the inter-

mediate world for further instruction and illustration in regard to the mode of Divine operation.

Question—Do you know of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg—the seer?

I know of the writings for the Church of the New Jerusalem. I know that these books contain the laws of life in heaven and earth. My brother, Elisha, was taught in these books after he came into the spiritual world and he told me about them. I have them in my library.

Question—Are they the same as in this world?

Yes, but not in the same form. Your language is not the same as that we use. Ours is a universal language.

I wondered at first how you had come to know that I was alive and could talk to you. Now I understand; it is because you have become acquainted with the books that tell all about the spiritual world and the three heavens. You also know that we are near that world and can answer, when permitted, any wish that we or our friends express.

Not only this, but you know how to obtain information in regard to the Sacred Scriptures and how they are to be understood. I rejoice that this great wisdom has been given into your hands, and that you have not turned away from it as so many do. I have talked with brother Hubbard and he, too, is glad for you to have in the natural world what we had to learn in the spiritual world. All we can do for you is to assure you that these books contain the wisdom of the heavens, and are the foundation of the church called the Church of the New Jerusalem.

Question—What do you understand to be the Church of the New Jerusalem?

It is described in the Book of Revelation—the last in your Bible, in chapters 21 and 22.

Question—How is it to appear in this world?

I am not prepared to say in what form it will be let down to that world. *It is the spiritual descent of the WORD in its true unfolding.* It will take form according to the state of those who accept its heavenly teachings. I have also heard that this church has appeared on the earth with few members, and that there is a division among them in regard to several points of usage and belief. This can only be expected in a state of things so disorderly as is the natural world at the present time. There will be diversity in every state; but with so much self-love and love of the world, it is not to be expected that the church can grow in its members without much of conflict and many apparent defeats. I have no advice to give any one in regard to church membership, each must follow his own light in the matter, as between his own soul and the Lord to whom he owes allegiance. It is a serious matter when one is given to see new truth, what he will do with it. I will not even say what I would do in any particular case, only that I would lay the matter before my own conscience, and pray the Lord to give me to see my duty, as in every other question pertaining to the interests of life which will affect my eternal destiny. If one does this sincerely, he will free himself from responsibility as to the outcome.

The Lord is not a hard master. He is merciful to our infirmities and weaknesses, but He will not spare the rod of correction if we are stubborn and rebellious in following our inclinations and desires. There is a law governing in both worlds; that is, when any one sees a light before him,

he should give up whatever prevents him from following that light. I have been led step by step to my present happy home by being obedient to every such signal that appeared before my sight. I made the right halt in the natural world when I refused to profess a faith I did not believe. I have never been sorry I refused to join the church, though I was invited many times to do so; and in Illinois it was urged that a teacher ought to be a church member, and I was told that I could myself write a letter and come into the church. I scorned to get into a church in that way. I did not see things as they were presented in the Methodist Church and so stayed out, and I was better prepared to be taught in the truth than I would have been, had I been a professor of what I did not believe.

In this world all things are brought to the light and one's motives made the test of judgment. There is nothing more abhorrent to the Divine laws in regard to rectitude of life than professions of love and devotion to truth when these professions are founded upon self-interest. I could have had many friends by saying I was a Christian after the common style. The way to fight falsities is not to carry the banner that supports them. You know that no true soldier would fight under a false banner. I love to see the flag that symbolizes all my highest perceptions of what is real and true, as seen in the light of wisdom.

The same general principle governs in both worlds. I am now convinced more than before I came into this world that most of the teaching in the "orthodox" churches is not according to the laws of justice and right, as approved in the government of the Lord. There is no justice in what they hold about God's being the friend of believers and the

enemy of unbelievers, when many of the latter never rejected any truth that appealed to their reason and conscience. I was not a believer in their theology, but was not condemned on that account. I, myself, am witness that the heaven of angels who are nearest the throne of God are not believers in any mere faith without works, and that is a fundamental doctrine in most of the churches—that man is justified by faith only, that works must be done as evidence of justification, but that they have nothing to do with man's salvation. I wonder what they think of the Lord's words, that every man shall be judged by his deeds. If he has been merciful, he will receive mercy in return. If he has been forgiving, he will be forgiven. If he has been kind to the needy, it will return to him in kindness. The law, *As we have done to others, so it will be done to us*, is a universal law of the Divine government. There is no *faith alone* about that.

I wonder how men of intelligence have supported such inconsistencies as these which the church has held up to the world, and how any man whose eyes have been opened to see these inconsistencies can for even one day stay among those who present them to the world as the gospel of salvation. If all men hesitated as to whether they were to obey the laws of life as seen by their own perceptions of what is still true and good, where would the world drift? There are always some noble souls, ready to sacrifice life and reputation for what they see to be the truth; but "Many are called and few chosen."

If any one should come into this world before making a change from a church not in agreement with his belief, spirits of that church would cluster about him and claim him for their own, and it would not be as easy for him to get away from them as you think. If he were a sincere Methodist, they would have nothing to accuse him of. But

if he told them he was in heart a believer in another system of doctrine, they would shout in derision and tear him to pieces with scornful epithets.

Remark—They don't do that here.

In spirit they would, if they saw into his heart, when he pretends to be a loyal Methodist. They would turn from him with scorn, and justly, too. What business has anybody in a church, if he does not believe that church to be the best exponent of truth that the world has?

It is a matter of life or death to the spiritual man, to bear witness to the Lord's truth. If one is not willing to do that, the light will soon become obscure and fade from his vision, and he will wonder that he could ever have believed any one saw any better light than the old ways teach. So my way is to see if a thing is right and at once act upon it. My conviction is the light does not grow stronger by delay. There is always danger of complications, if any one hesitates in doing his duty.

I have made many mistakes in *this* world, as well as in the natural world, because I was not instructed in the laws that govern men in the true order, in which man was made to live; but these mistakes do not interfere with the growth to perfect manhood, if made ignorantly and without an evil motive. They often serve the purpose of instruction by leading to greater care and preventing the hasty action that would result in more hurtful mistakes.

In illustration—I was once while in the natural world besought to recommend a certain instrument to the schools, because the inventor was a worthy man and needed the income that the recommendation would insure him. I have refused to do what many urged I ought to do because of its benefit to some individual, without considering the wider interest of the community. I was not sure that his inven-

tion was any improvement on that in use, and if not, it would work against the common good to change. Similar incidents occur in this world. This is given to illustrate the necessity of well considering both sides of any question, and acting in view of the most important interest and the highest good of all concerned.

ADDENDA.

March 16, 1908.—I am much pleased to know that these testimonies are to be collected and preserved in a form in which they may be useful to others who may come into the same state of perplexity and uncertainty with regard to the witness they are giving in professing their faith in dogmas imposed by creeds of past ages, that are neither rational nor scriptural; also to those who feel uncertain as to whether anything can be known of the spiritual and invisible world that is all about them and waits, longing for the opportunity to communicate a knowledge of its existence and laws to those who grope in the darkness of their own conceits and denial of all but the things of sense.

During the two years and more since these recorded conversations were held in the home of my brother, many proofs have come from the natural world that the state of unrest and love of gain have not diminished, but rather increased, and that there is a spirit of strife between oppressor and oppressed that threatens still further disorder.

The Lord over-rules all for good, and greater freedom of thought will prepare the way for more rational forms of instruction.

I rejoice greatly that these communications have resulted, not alone in good to those immediately participating, but that their influence has extended to many others.

Of myself I need only add that having been for many years free from the limitations and mutations of time and space, I can assure all who order their lives according to the laws of the Divine order that *the end of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.*

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER XXIII.

NARRATIVE OF THE MAN OF FEEBLE PURPOSES AND HOW HE WAS STRENGTHENED.

A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax
shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

By inheritance from my parents, I possessed a weak moral nature—that is I was vacillating and unreliable. Being warm hearted and demonstrative in manner, with a not unpleasing appearance, I was made much of and indulged at home and abroad, as the only son of a clergy-man is likely to be. Thus I became vain and self conceited. The religious instruction I received in childhood made no very deep impression as it did not recognize my weaknesses and did not tend to strengthen my character. A strong liking for dainty foods and stimulating drinks was rather encouraged than checked by an over indulgent mother, who could see no faults in her boy, so that I grew up in very adverse conditions as to the influences that would develop a strong upright manhood. I do not blame any one and now see

that the Divine Providence makes no mistakes as to the environment of every child, considering its hereditary tendencies. If I had not indulged in intoxicants of one kind as I did in drinking wine, etc., I would no doubt have gone into extremes that would have been more hurtful to satisfy the cravings of the natural man, who had the dominion during the greater part of my earthly life. As it was, though I was not intentionally or rather premeditatively cruel, it now makes me shudder to think of the sufferings inflicted upon and endured by my faithful wife and daughters, by my habits of self indulgence, allowing myself luxuries, while they were in want of necessities. If I had not been permitted to, in some degree, atone for this and to see that it was overruled for good, I must have hidden in shame from all human gaze. There were times of amendment and high resolve, when I sincerely purposed to live a life of self sacrifice and be loyal to my highest ideals, but the weak side did not stand temptation from without and the last fall seemed more grievous than what had gone before, as it was against greater light and ended in my removal from that theater of action.

AFTER DEATH HE IS WELCOMED TO THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN.

The circumstances under which my life ended are too painful to describe and were at first very indistinctly remembered; but later were pictured in a way that could not be misunderstood and was a lesson to be heeded, a warning to keep out of temptation. But to return, I awakened in a room like one in the old home where my family resided at the time. Though conscious that I was not alone, there

was no one in sight and I lay quiet, trying to recall the circumstances of my falling asleep, but was not able to do so. I heard a soft strain of melody and felt a strange uplifting of heart, an earnest desire to be a true man. I did not see anyone for some time but lay quietly listening to the melody and prayed for help to be a better man in every way than I had been. Then a strange thing,—a new experience came to me. I seemed borne upward, still on my bed, into a new atmosphere, above the trees and the clouds and at last rested on a mountain or high elevation where the sun shone brightly about me for a time. I then felt an impulse to move myself and was about to rise from my couch, which now seemed more like a cot than a bed, when a strangely fine and familiar face and form approached and I recognized dear old Judge G, who smiled and bade me welcome to the land of the rising sun. I said, "Judge, I had heard that you were dead but instead you look 20 years younger than when I saw you last." He nodded assent and said, "That is not surprising, for in heaven to grow old is to become young again." "In heaven!" I replied, "I can readily believe that is *your* home but how is it that you have come to earth again, or rather that you have come to me? I feel unworthy of your attention but indeed I do want to be a truer, better man." "R——," he said gravely, "if that is your steadfast purpose, you will now have the opportunity of putting it into practice, for I have come to inform you that you are now a spiritual man and in a world provided for the development of that part of you that has received too little culture in the past. As I said, I bid you welcome to the land of the rising sun, the land of hope and promise." "You surely do not mean—," I said,

stopped with a feeling of awe and some dread, for I had always thought I would make preparation for the change called death, and now I wondered if he had come to tell me that my time had come. He read my thought and bowed assent, only adding, "the change you dreaded has already occurred while you were unconscious. You have been raised out of your earthly body and are an inhabitant of the spiritual world." "But I am not out of my body." See!" I said, raising my hands and feeling one with the other, then rising from my couch, "then too, I have legs and feet and can walk." "So I too have a body that you can feel," he said, grasping my hand firmly, "and yet you know that the one in which you first knew me, has returned to earth." "That is true," I said, "and so it must be that spirits can return to earth and assume a body or as spiritualists say 'materialize;' for I cannot believe but that I have the same body I have always had." Then said he, "Rise, bathe, dress and come with me. I will wait for you without." "All right," I answered, and was soon up and going to the water I saw in an adjoining room, bathed hands and face, then dressed and opening the door, saw my friend waiting under a large tree. "And how did you like the bath?" he asked. I hesitated and he went on, "or did you think there was not time for a full bath?" then added, "there is no haste, you might have taken a plunge." "I washed my face and hands," I replied, "but the water felt cool and I did not want to keep you waiting." He looked troubled or anxious but said nothing more. There was below us on the slope a gurgling spring and brook. He remarked, "Perhaps you would like a drink before we walk." I answered, "I don't feel thirsty but that looks clear and spark-

ling and I will try it," more to please him than because I wanted the water. He watched me closely as I raised the cup to my lips. It sent a thrill through me, only partially pleasant and so I took but a sip and was going to turn out the rest when my friend asked, "Will you not try a little more? I think you will find it refreshing." I raised the cup again and this time took a mouthful but could not swallow it all, set the cup down and turned away.*

My friend looked grieved but said nothing, only, "suppose we continue our walk." We had proceeded but a short distance when we met my father-in-law walking erect, a fine looking man. He seemed a little startled at seeing me but extended his hand cordially. I drew back in alarm and said, "Is it possible you have come for me?" He replied, "I was told to come this way and I would meet a man who needed a guide but I did not expect to see you. It must be you have just come and are waiting for an introduction into the new order of things." I looked around for the one who had been with me but he had disappeared; and still more alarmed and disturbed, I said, "I am much puzzled to know what all this means, where I am, how I came, how it is that I see you whom I know to have been long dead, where Judge G. went, and —." "Then I will explain to you," he interrupted. "As you have been told before, you are in a new world, where people all come when they have been raised out of their earthly bodies and where every one has a chance to begin a new life and amend his ways, if he so desires. As you see, I am younger and

* His aversion to the use of these Spiritual Waters indicates his state as to the reception of the truths of the Word and a life according to them. A. R. 50.

stronger and happier than when you knew me before; and it is very fitting that I should be the one to assure and encourage you to start afresh."

RECEIVES ENCOURAGEMENT AND ADVICE.

In this world no one is punished for the errors of the past, but is encouraged to make his experiences in the natural world stepping stones on which to rise to a new and better life. That you may do this, every need is provided for, and you have only to desire sincerely the presence and help of the Highest and Best of all beings, and He is at hand to give all that is needed. To prove that this is so, come with me and see the home He has builded and furnished all ready for you and only asks in return that you will do what you can to encourage and help others that have made shipwrecks of their lives." We walked on for some distance admiring the beautiful scenery of hill and dale, lovely trees and running brooks, seeing occasionally deer and squirrels and singing birds. There were houses at a little distance and pasture fields with horses and goats. I did not see any sheep or lambs at first. When we came to a beautiful lawn extending to the street, in the midst of which stood a house,—it might be called a mansion, with many windows and verandas or porches about it—I stopped and exclaimed, "Did you ever see so perfect a home! It is ideal." "Then let us go within" said my father-in-law, "and see if the apartments and furnishings harmonize with the exterior." "Might we not intrude?" I asked, hesitating to enter the gate. "Not at all" said a voice from within the house; "we were waiting to welcome you to your new home and to congratulate you on the deliverance from the bond-

age of earth." My father and mother and many friends I had known and esteemed were there. The conversation was at first general. Then I was left alone with my father who narrated his experiences since coming into this world many years ago. He had been at first greatly surprised, then troubled because things were so different from what he thought the Bible had taught, as he had understood and preached in the natural world, so that he was in despair until he found a new way to read the Bible. He was much pleased that I knew something about the Bible having a spiritual sense and we conversed a long time about how this was illustrated in this world. I became more and more interested and convinced and decided to follow this light wherever it might lead, for I wondered if it were as little known and esteemed here as in the natural world. My father told me that only in heaven was there a clear understanding of it and that angels came from there to teach people in the intermediate state and place. When my father was about to leave, he said, "If at any time you desire my presence, think earnestly about it, after praying to the Lord," and he would be sure to come. Also that the Lord would at any time hear and answer my requests for help, if I found myself in danger or distress. "You are now free," he added, "to choose your way of life and the friends you desire to be with, without any interference, but oh my son, remember that only in a life of unselfish usefulness, is happiness to be found. I must now leave you to the guidance and tender mercy of the Lord and Saviour."

The experiences that followed are not so pleasant to recall but I will try to give a faithful account of them. I will go back just a little and say that in all that had been said

ation, and I want now to accept the situation in which I find myself and follow instructions so as to improve upon my past life that was in many regards faulty. What do you advise me to do as the first step to be taken?" "That depends," was answered, "very much upon what you are prepared to receive from the Lord, and in how far you will be guided by the law of mutual love and helpfulness that makes both the delight and harmony of all angelic societies. To make this clear to yourself and to others, you must pass some tests in which you will act out in perfect freedom from outside restraints, the controlling impulses and motives by which your life is governed. As the first step, return to your home and seriously reflect as to what is the object and aim of life as the Creator of man intended it to be."

REPENTS AND IS COMFORTED.

I returned as advised and gave myself to serious reflection. The conclusion reached made me cover my face in shame. There was nothing in my life that I could recall that seemed to answer the demand my reason made for what a true manhood required. I gazed upon the Ideal Man as I knew He was pictured in the Gospels. I thought of some of His followers who had so far as I knew, faithfully walked in His footsteps—heroes and martyrs, though unheralded and unknown. So I said that a true life was not impossible nor impractical, but just the contrary and this makes the failure to live it altogether inexcusable. It is dastardly, cowardly to try to excuse it, even if it condemns me to hopeless shame and reproach. Then in review came my own life in contrast. Little by little the curtain unrolled and another picture presented itself, not beau-

tiful and symmetrical like the first, but marred and defaced until there seemed scarcely a vestige of true manhood left and I fell on my face to the floor, where I remained dazed and despairing until a gentle hand was laid upon my shoulder and a kindly voice said, "*Though your sins are as scarlet they shall be made white as snow*"

I was much affected and said, "Oh tell me how I can redeem the past if this is possible; but I have shown myself so weak, so unworthy to be trusted, no one who knew my past would trust me and I dare not trust myself if exposed to temptation." The man answered, "We do not need to trust in ourselves but in the Lord who alone can overcome for us and in us. The first real step in the amendment of life is made when trust in self gives place to trust in the Lord." "How can I obtain this trust" I said, "for I have many times made the resolve and for a little time, the effort to amend and lead a Christian life and have as many times fallen back when I came among people who did not care for these things; and the last fall was the worst of all. Oh my poor deserted motherless children! How can I ever atone for the injury I have done you!" And I wept in shame and sorrow. Every one must face his past at some time and I wished I could see my wife and confess all to her. Then I thought how it would grieve her to know that I had not provided for the children as I ought, and I sat dumb and despairing, not knowing what to do—when, to my amazement, my wife stood before me, her face gentle and kind. Upon seeing my distress, she came near, put her arms about me and we wept together. After a little I said, "I am ashamed to see you. I am not worthy of your confidence or of your forgiveness." But she soothed and com-

forted me saying she knew I had not intended to be unkind, and it is only *intentional wrong* that condemns and destroys any one. I wondered to hear her say this and answered, "If I could only atone for the wrong I have done you and the children, by my self indulgence, I might have hope." She answered, "What we have suffered is all in the past and was permitted for our good. Let us not dwell upon that but begin anew, for every opportunity is given to make amends, if one so desires, for the errors committed in ignorance and weakness, as were so many of what we called sins and wrongs in the former world. Come with me my husband and learn how great is the goodness of our Father to His children. It is only to what hurts and would destroy us, that anger is shown, not to any human being He has created." I went with her trembling and ashamed; but gradually these feelings gave place to calmness and hope as she told of her experiences; how things were so much better than she had been taught to expect, how every kindness had been shown her, how she had found friends she had known on earth and a good home had been given her. I was for some time in the quiet shelter of her home before engaging in any active work or associating with others. After some days spent in company with my wife I said, "I ought to find some employment by which I could make myself useful, for an idle life is neither a happy nor orderly one." She said, "You had better wait until you are called or some way opens and invites you. Think earnestly of what you desire to do or of some one you wish to see." "Aimless action usually leads into dangerous associations." I said, "How am I to find employment if I do not seek it." "There are many kinds of employment here," she said, "but

I do not know of any just like those you have followed and you will probably have to learn about the new order of things before you can make yourself useful in any way. I advise that you ask for a teacher or guide before you go from the shelter of home."

NEGLECTS ADVICE AND GETS INTO BAD COMPANY.

Well had it been for me had I heeded this counsel. I had not yet learned the self distrust which comes from true humility of spirit before the Lord, as the only Saviour and Guide. My humiliation and repentance were more external on account of things that would make me ashamed before my fellow men. The self indulgence that had led to the neglect of those dependent upon me, brought thoughts bitter beyond expression. But to go back to my narrative. I said, "I will go out and look around. I will not stay long." I had gone but a short distance when I met a small company of, as I thought, nice looking people, who seemed, as I, to be walking without any definite purpose. One spoke for the whole and asked if I was a new-comer and being answered in the affirmative, invited me to join them in a short tour of investigation, saying they were trying to get acquainted with the order of things, see the country and learn how they could get the most out of life here, as had been their object before making the change that had brought them into new surroundings. We walked for some time through shaded pleasant grounds, conversing about the country we had seen and the friends we had met and the encouragement given by them as to the opportunities in this country to improve upon past experiences and make life worth living. I listened, saying little, recalling my own

experiences, when the country about us began to look changed, the trees were small and gnarled, the ground sandy; but they did not seem to notice and proceeded in expressing their views of what life ought to afford—a chance to live comfortably and respectably with a good deal of variety in the way of entertainment and travel on land and water, though they had found long journeys somewhat tiresome, etc. At this point one remarked that he had been told that in this world every one is expected to have some employment that would be of use in the community where he lived, and that this was the only way to be really contented and happy and also to retain his citizenship; “but” he added, “I have never been trained to do anything of this kind, only to look after my own property and do not know how, nor feel inclined to begin working for other people.” Another said he would feel insulted by such a suggestion and degraded by accepting such a position; the world owed them a living, at least that was what they had been used to without having to work for it. As I listened there was a response in my own heart to most that was said. I had been trying to find positions that required little work and responsibility and yet afforded a luxurious living for myself and the necessary provision for my family. When with them I would have been glad to give them all they lacked to make life easy and comfortable and would resolve to try to get more or live on less myself, so as to better provide for them, but the places I filled seemed to require me to dress well and live at hotels where it was hard to economize, so I had come to regard that kind of life as a matter of course,—a necessity. As for keeping in view the good of the commonwealth, that was not a question discussed

among the men with whom I associated, and had little influence on my life except in a vague way that had kept me from wanting to gain my living by fraud. So when it was proposed to form a company for the purpose of investigating opportunities this new country might afford for controlling utilities and providing for ourselves, I did not object to becoming a member; and when it was decided to go to the nearest center or city to be found, I went with the others. We had gone a short distance when darkness came upon us, so thick that we could not see each other nor any path to guide us.

AGAIN REPENTS AND IS DELIVERED.

I then thought of what my wife had said and of my promise to her and of my weakness in falling in with the proposals of these strangers who I now saw were looking only for their own selfish ease. All that I had heard about a better life came before me and I knelt in the darkness and cried, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" When after a little time spent in confessing my weakness, I again looked up, there was a dim light about me and I saw a path which a voice bade me follow and which led me back to the home of my wife, whom I found waiting at the door. She saw at once that I had met with some unpleasant experience and was too wise to question me. After a little I told her all about it and asked what I had better do to find employment. "What," I said, "do you do when I am not here." She answered, "You know I was always fond of music. People have to be taught here as in the former world, and I am connected with a school for that purpose and have my classes. There are also schools or places of instruction for

people who do not know what to do, who have never been trained to do anything in the right way. Probably in one of these you would be able to find that for which you are best fitted." "Do you mean something menial in the way of hard work?" "That I do not know," was her reply. "No work is menial when done in the proper spirit." I must go now and leave you to think things over. You know what I said about asking for a guide if you wish to go out." "What kind of a world is it that people cannot go to walk unattended or have any choice as to what they will do?" I said. "That depends entirely upon the purpose for which one lives," was answered. "If you have no definite purpose you are liable, indeed almost sure to fall among others of the same kind. You are without protection and have no right to expect what you make no effort to obtain. Everything is under law. What you give returns to you in kind." Having said this she went away. What she had said led me to reflect and ask myself what purpose I had in life and what I ought to have; and how, if as I saw I had looked too much to my own ease and comfort, I could begin a better life as I had been told by friends when I first came I would have the opportunity of doing.

"IF ANY LACK WISDOM LET HIM ASK OF GOD."

While I was thus reflecting there was a knock on the door, which being opened, a stranger entered and inquired if there was not some one here who felt the need of help. I said there is no one here but myself, and I am somewhat troubled and perplexed as to the course I ought to pursue to find my place and work in this world, which

I have discovered is in many respects different from the one I have left. *"If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God,"* was the answer. "Have you not learned this? Then indeed have you reason to feel that you are without resource at your command." I had heard this read when a child and the words were familiar, but it had never entered my mind as a practical rule of life and so I looked at the man who now repeated it, with wonder and inquiry, as if waiting, as indeed I was, for him to explain what he meant; and he proceeded, "There is only One source of intelligence and wisdom for angels and men as there is but One Source of life, who is also the Sustainer and Provider. Without His presence and power you could neither move nor think. You have lived as if life were your own, without any heart acknowledgement of dependence upon the Bestower. You must first of all be willing to see and acknowledge that you are but a recipient of life and then you will be prepared to see further the necessity of coming into harmony with the order that binds all things into unison and makes each contribute to the well-being of the whole. This requires that each being endowed with intelligence should become a willing contributor to this generous intent. You have been instructed both before and since coming into this world that the Creator of all things has revealed Himself as the Father of men and the Saviour who descended and redeemed mankind by means of a human nature that He assumed and glorified, and by which He is present with angels in heaven and with men on earth to guide and to save from the evil passions and delusions by which men are enthralled and led astray. There is no compulsion in the service He requires. You are free to choose whether you will be guided by the

laws of His Divine order, which are also the laws of your own being, or whether you think happiness can be found by living a life of self seeking." "No," I said, "I want to be a true man and a Christian. I want to give myself to the Saviour and live as He may direct me. What course would you advise me to take? What is the first thing I am to do in order to enter upon this life?" He answered, "Wait here with your wife until you receive further instructions," and then he went away. This was the second time I had been told to wait for instructions before leaving my home or rather that of my wife, besides the time I was advised to return to my home and give myself to serious reflection.

SEES A VISION PORTRAYING HIS EVIL STATES.

After waiting what seemed a considerable time and no one coming, I began to grow restless and thought I would step to the door and look about me. There was an attractive looking garden and grove near by and I thought I would go there and wait. As I stood looking, the landscape changed and instead of the garden, appeared a jungle in which were wild beasts and serpents hissing and many kinds of reptiles. They came toward me and in horror I stepped backward into the house and closed the door and stood leaning against it lest it might not be strong enough to resist an attack from the larger animals. After standing for some time and hearing no noise, I went to a window and looking out saw my wife approaching without seeming to see any of the things that had so terrified me, nor did I now see them, but instead the pleasant landscape that had before been there. When she asked me how I had en-

joyed the morning, I told her of the visitor and that after he had gone I had grown rather tired waiting with nothing to do, but did not mention the changed landscape until she remarked, "You look troubled as if something had alarmed you or disturbed you." Then I told her what I had seen and asked what it meant. The answer was given rather hesitatingly, "I have learned since I came into this world that the things we see about us represent the state of our minds or what is within us. Wild beasts are like the passions that are not controlled by the higher nature." "And" I said, "Snakes and reptiles are appetites that untamed, hurt and sting. I have read that somewhere but did not take it to heart as I ought—and the jungle? I see it now. A man who has not learned to control these in himself is not safe anywhere and needs a guide. I see, I see; but what am I to do, one does not grow strong by inaction." "No," was the reply, "but inaction is safer than action until you start in the right way."

SHOWS A WANT OF PURPOSE AND IS GIVEN ANOTHER
LESSON.

My next experience came from an unexpected source. I was again alone and wishing for companionship when the door seemed to open of itself and looking out I saw a number of people, men and women dancing and others playing games in a pretty park not far away. My first impulse was to go among them but something held me back; and while hesitating, a pleasant looking young man approached and said he was attracted to the house by feeling that some one was within who wanted companionship and asked if I was not that person. I replied that I was feeling rather lonely

but had been advised to remain until some definite purpose had been formed, and then a light would guide me to the place where I would find instruction and help to pursue the course that would bring me to my proper place in—I did not dare to say heaven, for I felt unfit for association with heavenly beings. While I hesitated the man looked at me searchingly and said, "I see you have been trained in the idea that every man must have some work and keep in his own place. Now I believe in being free to go and do what will bring me happiness. I wasn't made for a humdrum existence nor to serve the public good as some have said. The universe is large, let us go out and explore its vastness and not be circumscribed within narrow limits." "But," I said, "can we go without a guide? Are there not places of danger here as in the former world?" "I have not found any and I have been around a good deal," was replied. "But if you are afraid to trust yourself," he said with some scorn that awakened all my latent pride, "of course you might find what you are looking for." While I still hesitated he said, "At any rate, join us in some games here on the lawn." I thought there could be no risk in this, but when I had gone out with the man and joined his companions, the whole landscape seemed to have changed. The house had disappeared and in place of the grove was a sandy desert. The others did not seem to notice this but proceeded with their games in which I found no heart to join. I turned in the direction of the house I had left, but saw instead a row of low buildings such as are used for barracks and some men came and began drilling like soldiers. I watched them for a little time when the commander beckoned for me to come nearer and when almost to them

he asked in rather a stern voice, "Why are you here?" to which I replied that when I was feeling lonely I was asked to join in some games near my home but that now I seemed in a different place and did not know which way to go. The man said, "Why are you not at work? In this time of the day orderly people do their work and play later." I said, "I have no work, but was told to stay in my home until I was called for. I did not intend to go but felt lonely and tired waiting." "You seem not to have learned to obey orders," replied the officer. "A good soldier never quits his post because he feels lonely. How would you like to join our company and learn the drill that makes a good soldier?" "I think I ought to go back to my house if I could find the way and wait as I was told," I replied. "That is right," said the man, "and if you will follow the path and keep to the right you will find the home you left." "Thank you," I replied, really grateful for the instruction. I found my way back without difficulty and waiting for me was my wife and her father who asked how it was that I had not remained in the home, adding that I had missed a very important visit from one who came to instruct and put me in the way of securing permanent employment and happiness. I told them I had not intended to leave the house, only to go into the lawn while I waited. They said that showed my lack of acting from a steady and fixed purpose; that no good end could be attained without this, which should always be kept in view as the controlling motive for every action. That I deeply regretted my impatience and disobedience, is but a faint expression of the humiliation of spirit with which I now came to see what had been the motive that had prompted most of my actions in the past.

Want of high and definite purpose had led to many actions of which I had reason to be ashamed. This I now confessed to my wife, and she, ever ready to condone my faults, replied, that since I now saw this there could be no barrier in the way of my progress and happiness. But, I said, "By my fault I have lost my opportunity of receiving instruction from the angel that was sent to put me in the right path and have no right to expect another, and do not deserve it."

NEVER TOO LATE TO AMEND.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive," said the familiar voice of my father close beside me. "I have come, my son, to assure you that it is never too late to amend and begin anew. Let the mistakes and errors of the past be stepping stones on which to ascend to a higher plane of life and more noble endeavor. If you are now ready I will conduct you to a place where you will be given instruction and opportunity to put into action every truth you may acquire." "Can E—— go with me? I do not like to leave her alone," I said. My father was pleased to hear me ask this and answered, "You need not be separated, for one who has found his work can come and go at pleasure, and in this world thought brings presence. E—— also has her employment as she has told you. You can arrange to be together as you may desire." I was greatly relieved and glad to go with my father. We walked for some time through a varied and beautiful landscape in which were fields and groves and animals feeding, until we came to what seemed the grounds and buildings of a college or university, and were met at the entrance by a young man who asked if he could be of service to us. My father replied

that his companion had not been long in this plane of life and had not yet found the use he desires to serve; and, I think is now prepared to improve the opportunities that this institution and community will afford. I was cordially received and conducted to apartments furnished like the house I had been taken to when my relatives and friends welcomed me to the new world into which I had come. I waited here until summoned to a large hall in which were gathered men and women for conversation, music and games and where I was treated with cordiality and kindness on every hand, so that I formed a very pleasant impression of the community in which I had come to live. Later I was invited to take a walk in the park and gardens adjoining, beyond which were grounds for athletic sports and games. Thus was my entrance to the place of instruction made so pleasant. Upon returning to my house I found my wife who was much pleased with my surroundings and remained with me until her duties of the following day required her attendance. There was a special apartment provided for her where she could spend what time she desired. After a season of rest and meditation I attended a place of instruction and later, seeing others employed, I asked if there was not some work I could do and was given charge of a small park or garden where was a little lake and boats. I was to stay a part of the day as a guide for visitors and to preserve order. I met several who had recently come from the earth, some former acquaintances from whom I learned of my children and of the church in ———. When memories of the past were awakened I found myself unfitted for present duties, so learned gradually to live in the present and give attention to

my duties, avoiding what would interfere with these and the course of instruction given to classes I was expected and wished to attend. Thus the old life receded and I entered more and more into the love of truth and of being useful, and later was transferred and had my home in the community where reside Mr.—— and others who instruct in spiritual truth, and are light bearers to many who are preparing to give instructions to those who come into this world with the most distorted ideas concerning heaven and eternal life—many of them sincere students of the Word but have applied it to outward conditions and the reason has not been developed. The uses performed here are various and not easy to be described. I answer calls for information in regard to the various meeting places and the hours when instruction on different topics is given and act as conductor to new-comers and strangers. I act as door-keeper to the place of general meeting for recreation when the day's duties are finished and answer questions as to the general principles upon which the community is founded and the many uses served, all tending to the developement of a normal well rounded human character. Nor are my duties confined to this community but I am sent as visitor or envoy to other localities, where similar centers of influence are established. My wife is with me, I am most happy to say. She remembers you very well and sends messages of greeting and good will. We are here only a part of the time. Since I have come into a better state our home has been transferred into the interior plane which is our heaven or abiding place.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The person who gave the following testimony was intimately associated with the family of the "narrator" for some years. She then expressed great interest in finding a more spiritual interpretation of the Bible than that taught by the church in which she had been trained and to which she continued to give the support of her influence as teacher in a university where she was employed for many years.

My Dear Friend: I have been told that you could talk with people in this world and have wished that you might have the benefit of my experience since I came into the world of spirits. I had been ill for a long time, but thought myself nearly recovered. My coming here was quite unexpected.

WELCOMED BY HER GUARDIAN ANGEL.

I was awakened from a peaceful sleep by the gentle touch of a hand on my face and upon opening my eyes, saw bending over me a woman with a face of great beauty and gentleness, who wished me a welcome to the land of my desires and hopes. I answered that I did not comprehend the nature of her greeting. "Am I not still in the sanitarium and in the care of the deaconesses?"

She answered, "You have had my sympathy and love during the trying experiences of your long journey, but you have at last reached your home, where you will no longer wander alone and friendless. You will soon meet friends who have been waiting your coming."

She then asked if I would not arise from my bed, and I answered, "If you will kindly assist me, I will try to do

as you request." She gave me her hand and I was able to get out of my bed and go to a tank of water that she told me was for my bath. I felt stronger after the bath than I had for a long time, and finding raiment in my room, was soon dressed, when I was joined by my attendant and we went out of the door, which she opened.

"IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS."

We were in a wide street, where many houses were visible, and my guide entered one of them and asked how I liked the looks of it. I replied, "It is my ideal of a pleasant home. I could not have planned one to suit me so well."

She said, "Then you are to have this for your present home."

"But," I said, "I must not stay when I do not know how I can pay for so good a place. I have been ill a long time and my funds are well nigh exhausted."

She said, "You need not be troubled about paying for your home. It is a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, who has brought you from the natural world, where you labored and suffered, into this heavenly kingdom where you are loved and made welcome to all you can want."

A HAPPY REUNION.

I fell at her feet and said, "Jesus, I love and praise thy goodness." I was more joyful than I can express. I made what acknowledgments I could to my gentle guide, and she led me into a house near by where were my father and mother, with other friends and members of my family that I had never seen in the natural world. They all embraced me and rejoiced at my coming. We were more joyful be-

cause of the long separation and the many sorrows that befell us during our earthly life. You know some of them. You remember my dear mother and know the weary way she had trod; also that father was much afflicted by a fall late in life. James, my nephew, was here, and had made his way through great trouble. Sister, too, came to greet me, and the children who had long been in heaven. I was the last to come and the whole family were drawn together to welcome my deliverance from the world of sorrow. All I can say is that it was more than I had hoped. I was again among the loved and lost, but now found friends. My dearest hopes were more than realized.

TRUTH OF FIRST IMPORTANCE.

I found I had much to learn, though I learned from Mr.—— in the natural world that I was a spiritual being and would not need my earthly body again; also many other things that have been of great use to me since I came into this world. That God is one I had believed and that He is manifested in Jesus Christ. I had also believed in the intermediate world and that I would here meet my friends, but still I had not realized these things as I might if I had not bound myself to the church of my childhood. My reason taught me that much of their teaching is not true, but I could not free myself from the influences that held me bound within the church organization. Many are here like myself, almost but not quite free to receive the Lord in his opened Word. We see dimly there is a spiritual meaning in the Bible, but are not able to grasp the full import of what this means. I called your brother C—— and laid my difficulties before him. He advised me to ta

to you when I could and ask you to read with me some passages from the Word. I would like to read from the Book of Revelation, in the 21st chapter, where the New Church is described as a bride adorned for her husband.

Your Brother C—— told me he has been helping many that he knew in the natural world to see the spiritual meaning of the Word, and that he would make every effort to assist me that he could. I might have learned these things when I was with you in that world, but did not free myself from the old ways of thinking. I regret the lost opportunity. It means so much to one in this world to have improved upon the opportunities the Lord had provided, to understand His Word and the laws by which the universe is controlled. I might have been able to help others, if I had counted the Lord's truth of more value than the many church influences that were in operation to make the world better. I thought I could do more good by working in the Methodist Church than in professing what would make people regard me as a heretic and skeptic. I now see that I made a great mistake, when I was convinced that you were in the right, that I did not join my thought and effort in making life one struggle to find and follow the truth.

"BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS."

I would like to speak with you about reading the Word in its spiritual sense. We had for our lesson yesterday, the clouds in which the Lord promised to reveal himself to the world. We also read that the power of truth is in the ultimates, which are here called *clouds*. Today we are to read about the people who are to receive the spiritual sense of the Word as revealed in the Second Coming of the Lord. I

can bear witness to what is said about the clouds in this world; that no one who does not have the spiritual sense unveiled can at all be enlightened in regard to the general principles of the Divine government.

FINDS HER FATHER UNDER A CLOUD.

My father came into this world many years ago. He was, you know, a teacher of religious truth, and also acquainted with the commonly received ideas about physical science.* He was not acquainted with any form of religion that recognized the Bible as having need of a new interpretation, and was not able to see that his beliefs were not in accordance with what the Bible taught; therefore he was in great distress when he found that many things he had held as revealed truths were in exact opposition to the order he found to prevail in the spiritual world; therefore he was compelled to reject the Bible as an imposition. He then looked about him to find some theory that would explain how things are really managed in both worlds. He visited men of science and heard them discuss their philosophies, and wandered into many religious assemblies, but finally gave up the hope of having his difficulties explained. He then became unhappy, and was, my mother says, for a time possessed with all sorts of hallucinations. They were in an obscurely lighted place where their wants were all supplied and they were given some employment that furnished them with occupation that made their lives comparatively happy. When James—their grand-son—came into the spiritual world, he also was given a home

* Her father had been physician, preacher and teacher in a Methodist College.—Editor.

near them for a while, but he soon became restless and was taken to a place of instruction where he is being taught, as I told you, the right principles of government in both the natural and spiritual worlds.

LIGHT BREAKS THROUGH THE CLOUD.

My father now is willing to believe that he may have been mistaken in his opinions regarding the Bible and its interpretation. I myself am your witness that clouds are about those who cling to the natural meaning of the Bible.

My mother has not suffered as my father, because she held only to what she had been taught, without confirming it for herself, and was willing to accept the truth when it was shown her. Father also has softened in his nature, so that I am giving him what I have learned before and since coming here and he is eager to begin the study for himself. Angel teachers are with him and he will soon be prepared to go to his final home. My mother also is being instructed and my sister begins to see the real truth.

For thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.—Ezek. 34: 11-16.

Dr. S., the father of the "Recorder," was a man unusually endowed with human sympathy and love for his fellow men. As a physician, he excelled in diagnosis. When transferred to the spiritual plane these two qualities fitted him for his special work among the sorrowful and degraded. His wife who tenderly loved little children has the care of infants in their home in the celestial plane of the second heaven. A sample of his work is given in No. 8, page 238.—*Editor.*

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE EVIL.

There are prison houses where those are confined who desire to injure the life and happiness of others. They are made as comfortable as the safety of the more innocent will permit. There are also hospitals where any who show signs of reformation are treated with all the advantages for improvement that they will make use of. There are physicians and nurses for these latter. My work is not in a hospital. It is rather that of a minister who seeks out those who have need of help that will give them a start in an upward course, and then conducting them to officers who have much acquaintance with all the provisions made in the world of spirits as to the needs of particular cases. I work days and what is to them night, among these people. When I need rest and refreshment, I come home where your mother and the little ones she nourishes bring me such a sphere of heavenly peace that I am delivered at once from all the anxiety and care that this sorrowful acquaintance would impose.

The following is in reply to a question asked of Dr. S. in regard to the state of his four children who died in infancy.

They are all in the third plane of the second heaven; being of the spiritual rather than the celestial genius. Their

state is an exalted and happy one. They were not of such a nature as to bear the hardships of the natural world and so they were introduced into this, where they were protected while their spiritual life was developed. Now they are angels; having been instructed in the intermediate world in the knowledge of things good and evil and led to choose the good as of themselves. This is necessary with every human being, that they may acknowledge the Lord as the source of all good and turn to Him as their Saviour and Redeemer.

Question—How is it that little children are permitted to be burned and otherwise suffer injury?

*Answer—*Life is all one, and there is no break when one is brought into this world. A great darkness comes over my spirit as I contemplate the sorrow that mothers suffer when their children come into this beautiful and happy world, where all are free from suffering, with every advantage in their favor to develop into angelhood. I wonder how long it will be before the shadows of worldliness will give way before the light of life? I wonder that we mourned for our little ones when I see them so beautiful and happy and freed from all you have suffered. I wish I could bring this picture before every sorrowing mother. How she would rejoice to see her children gathered into the arms of angel mothers, who are never selfish or angry. What joy it is that we know these things, and can bear witness to them. It will not be always a source of sorrow on earth when a loved one is called away.

But to return to the question: The children who are made for heavenly training are brought here at the right age and in the best way for all concerned. Some people need a shock to rouse them from some kind of lethargy that has settled on their spiritual life, and no one but the Lord knows how to apportion to each one conditions that will best preserve and promote his spiritual life.

Voices from the Open Door

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CHAPTER XXV.

The following communication is from a man for many years an acceptable minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was noted for originality and directness in his style of speaking.

He lived a long and useful life and passed on in a good old age, having been superannuated for several years.

He left the natural world seven or more years before this testimony was given in September, 1908.—*Editor.*

TELLS OF EARLY HISTORY AND FORMER VIEWS.

I was, as you have been told, called an old man and had been in feeble health for some time when I was raised out of my earthly body. Still, my awakening in the spiritual world was a great surprise. I had no definite conception of what death would bring to me. I expected to remain in a semi-conscious state until my body should be raised, or a new body formed out of some vital substance concealed within the frail and decaying part; and that this might be many or few years, as the times and seasons had not been revealed.

As there seemed so much uncertainty about what the future life might be, I gave my time and efforts to preparing myself, as I thought, in the way the Bible taught, by reading and prayer and trying to lead an upright life that I might meet my Saviour in peace when he came to judge the world and place on His right hand those who trusted in Him for salvation. I had spent most of my life in trying to induce other people to accept Him as a Saviour, give up their sins and devote themselves to His service, without really knowing what was involved in this call to consecration, feeling sure if it was sincerely made, the person was enrolled among God's children and would find a home in heaven; though as to where heaven was and in what it consisted, my ideas were vague and unreal.

IS ALARMED ON AWAKENING.

When awakened by feeling the presence of another whose hand was gently laid upon my own, I opened my eyes and beheld the face of a brother who had preceded me by several years. I was filled with alarm and said, "Have you come to warn me of some danger or evil that threatens my life or that of my family?"

He smiled assuringly and replied, "No evil can befall those who trust in the Lord and try to do His will."

"Then," I asked, "why have you come out of your grave to speak to me?"

"To welcome you to your home in the Heavenly Father's house," was the reply.

I did not feel assured, and said, "I slept and wakened and feel refreshed and stronger than I have for a long

My brother replied, "I know that you have slept and that now you are awake; and in that sleep you have been raised out of your body of earth, and are now a spirit in the world of spiritual beings."

I wondered what he could mean and felt of my arms and legs and said, "But I am not out of my body. I will get up and let you see that I am alive and have my body and am able to use it as well as before; so it is useless to try to make me think I am not in my body and a man as much as I ever was."

"That is right," was the answer; "rise and bathe in the water near your bed; and when you are dressed we will walk in the open air."

He then withdrew and I hastened to rise. The touch of the water thrilled every fibre of my body; and after a general bath I dressed in clothing that seemed as if made to order and opening the door, found my brother waiting near. He then proposed that we walk in a street that was shaded and had new-looking houses and yards on one side, while on the other was a pleasant park.

We walked for a little while in silence, when I asked, "What is the name of this beautiful city, and to whose hospitality am I indebted that I have received so kind a welcome? Is it possible that I was unconscious and needed care beyond what I can recall; and that you, whom I at first took for my brother who died several years ago, are another person,—though the resemblance is striking?"

He answered, "I am indeed your brother Henry, and I welcome you with all my heart to your home in your Heavenly Father's house."

I was too much astonished to speak for awhile and wept in silence; then asked, "If this is true, what does the Bible mean when it is said that the Lord will descend with the sound of a trumpet and call all who are in the graves to stand before His judgment seat?"

The answer was, "The Lord *has* descended and called you to rise out of your earthly body; but in His coming was too gentle to alarm and startle you; and now He is going to show His presence in a way you cannot mistake."

HAS A VISION.

I looked above at the sun that shone as if rising in the east and saw a glorious face that smiled as if in assurance and welcome, and fell on my face in speechless adoration and worship; for I knew this to be the face of Jesus, my Saviour, and felt a joy and love beyond expression.

After a while my brother raised me in his arms and said, "Brother, have you seen the Lord?"

I exclaimed—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all."

My brother was delighted with my answer and said, "Now we will find your home where you may rest, see your family and study the laws of the Divine order and government."

"Are not these laws contained in the Bible?" I asked in some surprise.

"Indeed they are when the Bible is rightly understood," was the answer.

"Then," I said, "The Bible has been my study these many years and I certainly have a pretty full knowledge of its teachings. It has been the business of my life to instruct others and show the way to heaven; and must I begin here to study? Have I not taught that God is in three persons; and that when man had broken His laws, the Second Person came into the world and bore man's sins in His body on the tree, and so made atonement to the Father for the sins of the whole race; and that all who will believe that He has done this and trust in His atoning blood will be forgiven and saved?"

"Alas that you have so misled men!" was answered in a sorrowful tone.

"What do you mean by that remark?" I asked with some asperity.

"Just what I said," was the reply. "And the prayers you have offered show you had no correct idea of the object of worship as He is revealed to angels and men in the Bible. You will have to begin at the beginning and learn that you knew nothing of the meaning of the Bible as it was intended to be read and understood. But we will not discuss this now."

IS GREETED BY FRIENDS.

When he stopped speaking, other relatives and friends came to meet me and we were at the door of a beautiful house, which we entered and which my brother said was the home I had builded, or the Lord had builded for me while I was trying to do His work and help my fellow-men.

I was so surprised and glad at meeting my friends and seeing them look so natural and happy, that I did not for

a time think more of what had been told me; but when they were gone and I was left to reflect on all I had seen and heard, only that vision in the sun kept me from being overcome by perplexity and confusion of mind.

At last I fell asleep upon a couch where I had reclined; and when I wakened I found that the sun was hidden by clouds and that I could see but dimly the objects about me. As I lay thinking and recalling the incidents of the morning, my brother entered the room and invited me to go with him to a service which he said would be conducted by a former Methodist bishop. He said I must not be surprised if I heard doctrines different from those taught in the Discipline.

GOES TO A LECTURE.

I was eager to go and we soon came to a large building on an elevated ground where many people were gathering and entered with the rest. The seats were arranged in a semi-circle and no one was out of sight of the speaker.

The service began with a period of silence and then all joined in a song of praise led by an orchestra. The speaker rose and said: "My friends, it gives me great pleasure to meet so many gathered here in one body, though from widely separated places in the world you have recently left, yet all connected with an organization called a church, to which I also formerly belonged, and of which I was for a time one of the General Pastors or Bishops. Having been here for a considerable length of time, I have had opportunity to test the tenets of belief by which we were united as in one body, and to which we clung with great tenacity as though they had been a direct revelation from the acknowledged head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"One of these, you will remember, was in regard to the resurrection of the natural body and the judgment scene that was to follow, as described in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. You have had sensible experience that with each one of you the resurrection has taken place; that is, you are clothed with a body and with garments fitted to protect and cover that body, which are not of your own providing.

"It has been made my duty, and it is also my pleasure, to announce to you that the judgment described by St. Matthew and expected by you, has long ago taken place in this world where you are now gathered; and that a new order has been instituted, by which each is judged separately by means of a system of truth that has been revealed by the Second Coming of the Lord, as He foretold at the time of His departure out of the natural world when He became invisible to natural sight.

"The supreme test of every one's internal state, or character, is made by the presentation on the Lord's part and the reception on the part of man of the one great truth, that in the Lord Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; that there is no other Divine Person than He whose love and truth beam upon us from the sun above our faces and who appears to every one who desires His presence and help."

I looked at my brother, who bowed assent, and thought of that glorious Face that had smiled me welcome to this new world, and was glad.

Pausing a few moments, the speaker continued: "As you become further acquainted with the order and arrangement of affairs in this wonderful world, you will meet many things to surprise you; many things contrary to what yo

thought were taught in the Bible; but do not on that account think the mistakes were in the Bible; but hold your minds open to be shown that the Bible, like the works of its Author, has, hidden beneath the surface of its letter, a richness and depth of meaning that surpasses all language to describe; and if you will be patient and trustful, all apparent difficulties and contradictions will be explained."

DOUBT AND PERPLEXITY BRINGS DARKNESS.

With some added words of assurance and encouragement the assembly was dismissed; and in a few moments I found myself alone at the entrance of my home. I walked about for a little time and sat down under a tree to consider what I had seen and heard and compare it with my former ideas, and asked myself, "Is this all a dream or hallucination? Where am I? What is before me? This cannot be heaven. I seem to be just the same kind of man and the things about me seem much the same, and yet different. I have seen my brother Henry and other people who have been called "dead" much longer; and yet they live and act as they did before; only the old have grown young, and some who did not pretend to be Christians,—who played cards, worked on Sunday and *seemed* to follow the world in every way, are with the sanctified church members and seem just as well off in all respects. There is no use in saying the Bible did not deceive men."

I argued in this way for some time before I noticed that the daylight was all gone and not even a star appeared when I looked above me. Then I thought I would try to find the door and go in my house until the night was gone and the sun rose again; but groped in vain to find either house or door. Then I thought I would go back to the seat under

the tree, but these, too, had vanished, and I stood alone in the darkness and a cold wind made me shiver. I felt like one lost in a desert without compass or guide, and wondered how long the darkness would last.

LURED BY "STRANGE FIRE;" HE DESIRES TO BURN
THE BIBLE.

Turning about and looking toward what I thought was the west, I saw a glimmer of light as if from fire; and going in that direction found men gathering sticks and laying them on a low fire. The sticks were not many nor easy to find and I said, "If you only had the Bibles that people take so much pains to print and distribute, you would soon have a much better fire than that and the world would be better off; for the Lord could then give His children a more truthful account of things than they find in that book."

The men said, "We didn't take any stock in the Bible ourselves and didn't believe there was any God,—only Nature, and its laws had to be obeyed, or people suffered the consequences."

"Not believe there is a God!" I said with horror, and paused; for the thought came that all I had believed and all I had hoped for of happiness and heaven was founded upon what was taught in the Bible.

Finally one of the men turned to me and said, "What proof do you see in this world more than in the former (if, indeed, we *are* in a different plane of life), that things do not exist of themselves? There are laws, but these are in the things themselves. The fire burns wood placed on it and we feel the heat and see by the light. If I turn from the fire, it is cold and dark. If I call, I am answered. When I need anything, I must exert myself or my needs

will not be supplied. Man is the active agent and all things respond to his will."

The others agreed to this, but one added, "We must go where things are and not expect them to come to us. This is a desert place. Let us go until we find material to build and then we can erect houses and make ourselves comfortable; and (speaking to me), will you not come with us?"

I answered, "I had a house given me for a home in a grove of trees; and while I sat in the shade and was thinking about the strange things I had been told about the Bible, the sun went down and it became so dark I could not find my way to the house, and seeing the light of your fire, I came here. I think I will wait here until morning and then go back to my home."

The men said, "We, too, had homes given or offered to us, on condition that we would conform to certain rules about laboring for the good of others, but we preferred to follow our own ways and travel about the country and build a place for ourselves, so that we can be free and independent."

I said, "That may be all right for you, but I will go home and try to find what the Lord Jesus wants me to do."

At this they laughed; and turning toward my home, I saw my brother coming to meet me, who inquired how it was that I had wandered so far from home and was in such a desert place. I told him of my thoughts about the Bible, of the darkness about me and the light in the distance that lured me from my home because I did not find the door, nor, indeed, the house; that when I refused to go with the men and turned to find what the Lord Jesus wanted me to do, a path appeared before me and light enough for me to

follow it; that I was going back and would wait in my home until Jesus showed me what to do.

"Then," said my brother, "you will not have long to wait; for 'the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him in truth and desire to do His will.' I will accompany you back, and if you need any other guide, a light will go before you."

STREAMS OF GOLDEN LIGHT FROM THE BIBLE.

It seemed but a few moments until we were at the door which opened as we approached the house; and going in, there appeared on a table in the center of the room, an open Bible, from which issued streams of golden light that filled the house. I looked at it with awe and wonder and read, "Search the Scriptures * * * for they testify of Me;" and I fell on my knees and prayed, "Send some one to teach me how to read thy Holy Book."

No sooner had I spoken than the light from the book was gathered into a single flame, as from a torch, which moved to and through the door; then rose somewhat higher, so that I had to look up to see it. It kept moving above a path which I followed until I came where a man was speaking to several gathered about him and answering questions in regard to the Bible. I joined the little company and heard some of my questions as voiced by others, explained in such clear and satisfactory terms and illustrations, that I was convinced that the person speaking had some method of interpretation by which the Bible could be defended from what I had thought it to be,—untrue and misleading.

When the speaker closed his address, I asked where I could find the source whence he had gotten his knowledge.

He said, "Come home with me and we will talk the matter over."

The light had stopped above the man's head and then after a little disappeared. His was a pleasant, modest home, and I remained several days, conversing at intervals and looking over some books I found in my room. I seemed to have entered upon a new life, with more clearness of perception and vigor of both mind and body.

While still in this house, I was awakened very early one morning (Sabbath) by the singing of many voices, seemingly blended into one strain of melody, that floated through a window which opened toward the east. Looking out, a soft light, as in the dawn of day, rose above the horizon and enveloped the landscape in a most delightful manner. I could not see the singers, but distinguished the words, which expressed joy and thankfulness and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ for creation and redemption and His ever-present care and love.

The friend with whom I was staying, later invited me to go with him to a service where the internal meaning of the Bible would be explained. I was introduced to the preacher, who had been one in the natural world; and after some conversation accepted his invitation to a house adjoining his own where I would have the opportunity to test the comparative value of what I had heard, by comparing it with other systems of interpretation both of the Lord's Word, His providences and His works; "for," said he, "there is a building not far from here used exclusively for the discussion of subjects that present difficult problems to new-comers into this world. Prepare your questions before going and you will find persons ready to discourse about them and offer solutions from various standpoints. Every

one here is in perfect freedom to think and to speak without any one's interference; only people are not permitted to think one thing and speak another."

It would take too long to tell of all the questions that were discussed and the variety of views presented. Enough is said when I tell you that people are not altered by the change called death, but have to learn in the same way they did before, by the use of experiment and reason, letting past experiences be a basis upon which to rest, or rather, plant our feet while we put to the test what is new and untried.

I had these experiences—that the Lord Jesus had heard my prayers and led and comforted me through many trials in the natural world; that He had smiled upon me and made my heart glad the day I was raised into this; that He had showed me that I would find what He had to tell me of His will and His ways in the Bible, here called the Word. Holding fast to these as basic, I could accept no teaching that did not help to reconcile the one to the other,—that the Lord Jesus Christ rules in heaven and earth; that He is the Saviour and Helper of men; and that the Word must be explained in a way to sustain this, as the one vital truth upon which all heaven is built; and also in a way to reconcile the apparent inharmonies and contradictions in the external form, in which it has been given in its letter to the church upon the earth.

FINDS THE TRUE LIGHT.

After many trials and comparisons of one phase of thought and system of doctrine with another, I found in the writings of the Church of the New Jerusalem that for which I had been searching, and was told that these same

books, expressed in natural language and suited to the comprehension of men on the natural plane of life, had been given through a man prepared for the purpose; and were in libraries in the natural world; and that a church had been established in which these were read and the Word explained according to them, as in heaven; and that by means of this, heaven and earth might come into harmony and act as one for the salvation of the race.

I was greatly delighted to hear this, after being convinced that these books are what they claim to be,—the opening of the internal sense of the Word. I rejoice that I am permitted to give this testimony through one prepared and called by the Lord to receive my message; and assure you that your trust in the Lord's providence and goodness is on a foundation that can never be destroyed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The unseen author of this message was a former clergyman and personal friend of the publishers. He was talented and genial and was held in much esteem by his parishioners for his christian character and devotion to his work. He departed this life about three years before the beginning of these conversations.—*Editor.*

HE EXPLAINS.

I had unexpectedly to myself heard a call from earth that brought me into conscious association with a person still in the natural world who was himself unable to perceive my presence or to hear any message not addressed to him through the senses of his body.

There was, however, in the same room a person whose conscious life was partially open on the spiritual plane and through her, I was able to address the friend who had an earnest desire to ask about my experiences since leaving the natural world and whether I had found conditions as I expected them to be.

THE INQUIRY ANSWERED.

I have many things to say to you, my friends. I found things quite different from what I expected when I came into this world, which is not heaven, as I expected, but an intermediate world much like the one I left in some respects. People have bodies as in that world and live in houses, and many have their families with them. Nearly all the people who have lived have come here when they left the natural world. Some stay a very short time and then disappear. Others remain here for many years. My stay will probably be long, for I have much to learn. I found

that most of my ideas were wrong and went to work asking for some one who could tell me what the Bible meant when it said my body would be raised when the Lord was to come for judgment and to destroy the earth. Many strange things are said in the Bible when you think they mean what they say in the letter. But I have found that the Bible was not intended to be understood in that way; also that heavenly things alone are treated of in the Bible. My teachers have been angels who once were men; and I have found that all the angels were once men and women in the world. This was a great surprise to me at first, for I had believed that they were a different order of beings and had so taught others.

Another surprise was that the angels taught me that God is not composed of three persons, but is one in essence and in person; that Jesus was God manifest and the only manifestation of the Divine who was incarnated in human nature that He might redeem and save mankind. I am full of sympathy for those I have led astray by teaching the errors of the prevailing theologies of the churches at the time I lived and preached in the natural world. I am glad to have this opportunity to give this witness to you whom I remember and love so well. It is a great proof of the Lord's mercy that communication has been opened between this world and that, so that many can be instructed in regard to these vital truths. This mode of communication is only with the very few and must remain so until the veil is lifted from the eyes of Christendom. No one can receive these messages whose mind has not been prepared by a real, spiritual affection for spiritual things. It is a great privilege to meet you and converse about these things. I think you have books that teach these truths. I can see

the evidence in your minds that these things are not new to you, but that you had learned of them by some revelation from the Lord of which I did not know. It should be the joy and work of your lives to spread this knowledge. Many would reject it, but it would be a gospel of joy to some and a witness when you come into this world that you have not been an unfaithful steward. It is a great thing to know them in that world. I have heard here of these books and that they were received by few in the churches. But they contain heavenly wisdom and will come to be the most studied of all books.

FIRST EXPERIENCES.

I will now tell you some of my experiences on coming into this world.

I awakened as from a refreshing sleep and found myself in a room which looked familiar, and yet was not just like the one I had gone to sleep in when I could last remember. I felt refreshed and was making an effort to rise when a man I did not remember to have seen before stood by my bed and gently bade me "Good morning!" He told me that as I had just come into a new world, I might like a guide to give me instruction about its laws and government and that he had been sent for the purpose of aiding me in getting acquainted with my new surroundings. I was greatly surprised and asked, "What country am I in and how did I come here? I have no remembrance of making a journey and cannot understand what you mean."

He replied, "You have passed from the natural into the spiritual world, and will soon find proof of it by meeting some you knew in the natural world, and also knew that

they had what you call *died* as to that world, but are now living as men and women in this world."

I began to wonder if I had lost my mind and was in an insane asylum; and it took me some time to be cured of this belief. All about me seemed so like the world I had left. I saw people and houses and trees and animals, water and many kinds of flowers blooming in gardens, and lambs sunning in pastures, and horses and cattle; men and women busy at some kind of work, and houses for instruction. I began to hear a new language that sounded like nothing I had ever heard before, but I knew at once what the words meant. They described the quality of the persons or things indicated. But I feel I have talked long enough now for the strength of my "recorder." I will finish my story another time. Good by.

RESUMES HIS STORY THE NEXT DAY.

Now I will go back to my narrative. I soon arose from the bed on which I awakened and looked about me. Everything appeared to move about as I had been accustomed to see in the world I had left. From all I could see, life was not changed. But soon I met one of my family who had long been dead. He accosted me kindly and expressed pleasure at meeting me. Soon, however, he vanished from sight and other friends came to greet me and were all coming and going without ceremony as it they were used to seeing people come as I had; but after awhile the one who had first appeared said he would show me the house that was to be my home for the present. He led me about for some time and asked me to choose a house I would like to live in. I said I had nothing to pay for a house and therefore had no right to choose. He said I was welcome to anything I

wanted and was loved by the angels, who delight to serve all who come among them. I cannot describe my emotions on hearing these words, but fell on my knees and gave thanks to the man who had so kindly greeted me. He raised me up and tenderly embraced me and said I was near the Kingdom of Heaven. He then brought me into a house which looked as if it had been built after my own heart. It had every beauty and comfort I could desire. I was left for a time and much affected by what had occurred. I gave myself up to consider what it could all mean. I almost grew dizzy. But without fear made myself comfortable and waited for what might come next.

Before I had much time to wait a knock at my door made me start to my feet, and opening my door I saw my mother who had been in that world we called *heaven* for more than forty years. She looked young and beautiful as an angel might and bade me welcome to a world of joy and peace. I was overcome with joy and clasped her to my heart. Many other dear ones came to me soon after; and after awhile I realized that I was indeed in the world of my desires and hopes, though so different from what I had expected.

Many are the pleasant surprises that have come to me, and I am so happy to tell you this that you may not dread to die. So many suffer from the fear of death. I wish all might know the blessings that come to the honest-hearted Christian or pagan. I might fill volumes with affecting incidents, but you could not make people believe them true.

Question—How is time marked in that world?

Morning and evening and morning again make the sensible divisions of time. There is no dark night that I have

seen. My object is to give a definite description of this world. Any questions will help me.

Question—What are the employments there?

That is one of the difficult questions to answer. They are various and unlike the employments of earth in that there is no building nor machinery employed. The houses appear as they are wanted. Many will sometimes come into sight at once. When no longer needed, they disappear.

There are many employed in giving instruction to those who have just come; and many find work in training those who sing in choirs. Some conduct choirs who lead in worship. Others superintend those who engage in healthful sports. Many kinds of recreating amusements are provided for weary ones of earth, and those who had no time to play there are given full liberty and taught how to use these things without harm to their spiritual nature. It is one lesson I have learned since coming here, that it is not wrong to play and be happy.

Question—Do you laugh?

Many do laugh very hard. My nature was not designed to indulge in hilarity, but I enjoy quiet mirth as much as any one.

Remark—You did here.

I am just the same now.

Question—Is the marriage relation continued in heaven?

Mother is much with me, but has her own home duties and employments. She makes happy a number of children who are in her care. My father is with her in heaven. Many who lived together in the natural world are still together there. Many others are separated with the death

of the body and do not wish to see each other again. My parents were united in heart as well as body and that union lasts forever. I was surprised to find it so; for the Bible, as I thought, said that there was no marriage in heaven; but I find that true marriages are only found with those who get to heaven at last. All other marriage is for material advantage in some way, though the persons may not know it at the time. The Bible is having another life in view than the one the Saducees had in mind. I will not undertake to make this plain. Heaven is the home of true lovers, and love is the life of heaven. I soon found that many come here with the same ideas I had. I desired to be of use and was given the happiness of making such persons acquainted with the first steps to be taken upon their entrance into this world. I do not give all my time in this way, but am trying to learn more myself and have made some progress.

I have had teachers who have been here longer and learned the laws of Divine order better. I do not read many books. I have not seemed to come to that yet, but may in the future. My eyes and ears have brought me in touch with the wonders of creation as they are unfolded in this world of causes. Where you are, the effects are seen; but here we see the causes of all that comes to you.

Question—Do we impose upon you at all by our questions?

It is a great pleasure to me to talk to you in this way. I began to think there was no orderly way in which I could communicate with former friends.

Remark—We have heard that evil spirits hover around trying to get access to any one in this world.

Evil spirits are not about those who have an honest heart and wish to know the truth. My experience is that ev

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Remark—We have heard that evil spirits hover around trying to get access to any one in this world.

Evil spirits are not about those who have an honest heart and wish to know the truth. My experience is that ev

spirits are attracted by those who love to be deceived so as to be free to follow their evil ways. My experience is also that no truth attracts evil spirits. My observation has taught me that like seeks like in this world more freely than in the natural world. Many are the illustrations of this when people first come here. Those who have loved God in the world seek to find Him the first thing, and ask, when they are told that they have made the change called death, if now they cannot see Jesus; and when told He is in the sun of heaven, they fall down and worship Him and rejoice to know He is the one God who rules all things.

Question—Is God more easily apprehended there than here?

That depends upon the state of the person. He is not seen by any who do not want to see him. They turn their backs to the sun and grope in darkness. He is like the moon to those who desire to live in freedom and let spiritual things alone, but want to do what is just and right to their neighbors. All see light according to their love of good. Many are made glad by seeing little and many want much light.

Question—Do the wicked seem to themselves to be in the light?

I may find that later. I do not know. All may have light by turning to the sun of this world. Many do not wish the light and grope in darkness.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

My next experience was upon entering my house after I had been away for some time. My mother was there and welcomed me as she used to do when I came from school. She kissed me and held my hand while I told her what I

had seen, and she explained the meaning of everything; so that I received my first lessons here as when I was a child at home. My dear mother was my first teacher.

Question—Is this opened door attended with danger?

I see no danger possible to anyone with an honest purpose to find the truth, and makes it a means to that end. I think you may regard this opportunity of conversing with departed friends as the gift of a loving Father to bring you comfort and the means of much spiritual improvement. My own experience almost convinces me that much of what we have regarded as evil has been a merciful accommodation of Divine love to the states of men.

Question—What is the fate of honest doubters?

Many are called infidels because they are too honest to profess what they cannot believe and are too much in earnest in seeking truth to take it at second-hand. It has been a great mistake on the part of the ministers to denounce unbelief as a sin without being able to offer a rational ground for belief. I see many here who were called infidels and are now sincere worshippers of the Divine Being made visible to their sight as the Lord Jesus Christ, who appears to every one who sincerely desires to find an object of worship who is worthy of the highest love and confidence of intelligent beings. He has made himself known on earth, but men claiming to represent Him have misunderstood and misrepresented Him to such a degree as to avert their face from the picture presented.

RECEIVES INSTRUCTION.

My theme will now be to tell you further of the instruction I have received. My mother taught me that God is not in three persons, but in One; that he is manifested in

the manhood assumed in Jesus Christ; that all in heaven worship and adore this Manhood, in which is all the fullness of the Godhead made visible in the Sun of heaven from which proceed light and heat; for life alone is in Him. I was glad in heart when I heard there is no anger in the Divine Mind to be appeased; that love alone makes laws; that love alone executes; that love alone rules the universe. My heart was overflowing with this love and I fell upon my face in worship and was lifted up and told that I was one of the very few Methodist ministers who made so much of this great truth. Many have been wrongly instructed and have confirmed themselves in the errors of their churches. I had been kept from being confirmed in these errors by my confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by thinking little about the doctrines of the Methodist Church. My mother had taught me to pray to Jesus when I was a little child and I always held to this and made no mention of others in my prayers.

Question—Then you did not pray “for Jesus’ sake?”

I will not say I never used that form but if I did it was only a form of expression that had no meaning to me.

TWO WEEKS LATER—TELLS OF HIS VISIT TO HIS PARENTS IN HEAVEN.

I have made a most pleasant and profitable visit since we met before. I not only saw my mother and father, but was in their home where they have lived since they reached heaven. It is impossible for me to give you any adequate description of the beauties and glories of that happy world where they dwell. My father is one of the angelic choir that makes melody in the early morning hours when life ~~seems~~ to begin anew and there is general rejoicing. You

are acquainted with the morning melody of the birds and that is a representative of the joyful strains heard from angelic choirs in the heavenly world. Joy and gladness is the chief note of their songs. May we be like them in our first conscious awakening!

My father made me glad when I left by saying, "I shall see you again before long, and it will not be very long until you come to go no more out." I have much to learn and much to do before I am fitted for that happy place.

MEETS A FORMER PARISHONER.

I was called to meet Mr. S——, who has lately come into this world. He was not prepared to find things as they are and I was called to explain how it is that the Bible does not tell the literal facts in the case. I was able to prevent him from turning away from the Word of the Lord and making himself a profaner of what he did not know. I myself saw how impossible it is for any one to reconcile the literal statements with the goodness shown by the Lord to all who not only believe His Word, but to those who despised, not only the truth, but also the good when they were in the world. I have the best of opportunities before me and will try and improve them; I mean the best in the way of friends and instructors to help me to understand the mysteries of the Word and why it was written so it has to be interpreted. Like all the works of the Lord its deep things are not on the surface. They appear to be different from what they really are when viewed by the powerful magnifying glasses of the internal sense.

THE REVELATION OF SWEDENBORG CONFIRMED.

I have myself read some things in the writings of Swedenborg that I cannot comprehend, but what has come with

in my own experience has fully confirmed the author's statements. I have told you a good many things about my entrance into this world and they are all supported by what is written,—that God is in the sun of this world and that we derive all our light from that source; that angels are from the human race; that the judgment spoken of in Mathew's Gospel has taken place; that there are three heavens; that my father and mother are living together as married partners; that they are in a home of their own; that all the angels look young and perfect men and women; that the Bible is read in the same spiritual sense you have in your books; that it shines with a light never seen anywhere else. If there is any other confirmation you need, continue to study and pray the Lord to guide you into the truth and you cannot go astray. I myself am wholly satisfied that these books are a revelation from the Lord of the internal sense of the Word of God. That is sufficient to give them my life-long and earnest study, for they cannot be exhausted throughout eternity. My friends, I wish you could see the absolute necessity of making this subject the first consideration in your life work and plans. Get all you can and give freely of what you get to any and all who will listen to your voice. That is the one thing worth living for.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONJUGIAL PARTNERS AFTER THE DEATH OF ONE ARE STILL NOT SEPARATED.—*Swedenborg.*

March 7, 1907.

MY DEAR WIFE:

It is known and acknowledged that the spiritual world is not afar or separated at all from the natural world; and that though together, neither is conscious of the presence of the other, with rare exceptions; and at the present day it is regarded as dangerous and disorderly to seek communication, at least from the natural plane, though it is granted that this may not be the case with angels sent on errands of mercy. There is good ground for most of this feeling, for like seeks like with unerring precision when the door is open and the path plain; and those in ignorance, error and evil would attract spirits in like states, who would confirm them in any cherished delusion or love, so that amendment in either would become impossible.

In the interest of man's salvation, the door of communication is carefully guarded; so that without some purpose to be accomplished, each plane preserves its distinct conscious life of activity, as though it were the only life to be lived.

Through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ you have been brought into a state where you can converse with the inhabitants of the spiritual world, who, being freed from their earthly bodies and so from the impediments of time and space, are still conjoined with those on earth who are capable of such elevation of thought and affection as to be

in a measure free from worldly motives and aims and so in like affection as we are, who acknowledge no other source of life and help than the Lord, our Creator and Saviour, and who seek in all things to be guided by His will.

Since you, too, have the same aims and purposes, the door of communication has been opened to you and we have been permitted to converse in freedom. And in the exercise of your natural and rational faculties, you have been able to perceive the presence and characteristic personalities of those with whom you have conversed, who are all persons you had known in the life of the body, or others introduced by them, or by the friends on that side at whose solicitation they were called.

You have received a number of interesting and instructive narrations of how persons of various religious beliefs and states of preparation have been led to find their place and work after coming into this world. While I have spoken to you and through you to others a number of times and on various subjects, I have thought it might be useful, that I should give a more detailed account of my experiences here, and a brief retrospect of the earth life that made these necessary.

I wish now to begin a narrative for more general reading than have been the conversations with my family and intimate friends, which were given for their benefit and to assure them of my continued love and sympathy and desire to share in and mitigate as far as possible the sorrows with which they were beset on account of peculiar conditions that prevailed both in the external environment and the internal conflicts to which these gave rise.

THE MISSION OF THE NARRATIONS.

These conversations have, through the blessing of the Lord, resulted in great good; for besides meeting the immediate needs for which they were intended, they have opened the way for the call which is to be sent anew to all in the Christian world who are looking for and longing for light upon the difficult problems in the Word; giving assurance that light has been sent and calling attention to its source.

This is the mission of the "Narrations" of experiences here presented. They must be their own witness as to the source from whence they came; and I, as the first called (or rather, permitted) to give testimony, do solemnly aver that from a knowledge growing out of several years experience as an inhabitant of the spiritual world, in which time I have conversed and been associated with those,—some of whom had been known to me on earth, and others first met here,—who have for a very much longer time been resident here, and passed through experiences that prepared them for a home in heaven; from whence they have spoken and given testimony that the Lord has indeed made His Second Coming and set things in order, first in the heavens; and through this has and is operating in the intermediate world and also in the natural or world of nature, by mighty forces, the effects of which are very manifest to all who have eyes to see; and the sign of this Second Coming is that new truth has been revealed; truth that appeals to the reason in every man in whom the rational faculty has been developed and who has not yet closed the way of entrance light from within by a life of evil.

REVIEWS HIS HEREDITARY AND ACQUIRED EVILS.

Since I came into this world, now more than four years ago, I have passed through varied experiences, have reviewed in detail the events and leadings, or rather the steps by which I was led; and the marvellous interpositions of the Divine Providence by which I was rescued from the evils of my hereditary nature, and still more from those that I had adopted and excused because of my natural tendencies.

I grew up self-indulgent as to the gratification of my appetites and tastes in eating and drinking, not having been taught that any moral quality could be acquired by this so long as I avoided spirituous liquors by which men become intoxicated. Being a somewhat frail child, I was a good deal indulged in notions of taste; and instead of the self-control that would have made my body vigorous, I yielded weakly to many of its longings and so acquired a sour and selfish disposition that but for the merciful guardianship of the good angels of childhood would have unfitted me for any useful work in the world.

As it was, there was always a struggle between the two natures,— sometimes one and sometimes the other having the ascendancy. Still, in it all, by means of instruction received from my father, who was an upright man; from hearing the Word read and expounded by sincere, though poorly taught preachers; and the lessons in the Sabbath school,— there was formed within my mind a conscience concerning what was right and wrong; and by this my various impulses and ambitions were in a measure kept in check, so that I became outwardly and in purpose of heart, free from the practice of what I regarded as vices or immoralities.

I will not go into the details of my ambitions and efforts to acquire fame and fortune. I did not turn from these be-

cause I had been defeated or feared that I might not succeed. On the contrary, I turned from them when there was every outward encouragement that both were within my grasp in the near future, if I did but continue as I had begun in my chosen profession,—the law.

YIELDS TO THE CLAIMS OF RELIGION AND BECOMES A PREACHER.

But there had always been something within me that was not satisfied,—a conviction that the God who made me had a claim which I was not recognizing and to which I was not responding; and this grew upon me as the years advanced and brought me in contact with various phases of life. My domestic affections were naturally strong, and in this stage of my development were in a good measure controlling. My chief care and ambition was that my promising boy of tender years, whom I loved with the ardor of my impulsive age and temperament, should have advantages of education and development, of which I felt the need, but which had been denied me.

When, after a very short illness, I felt that he, my only child, was dead (as we then said) and would need no more of my thought or labor, all motive seemed to have died out of my heart and I was overwhelmed for a time. I felt that the Almighty had a controversy with me and had conquered; was stronger than I; and that the wise thing for me to do was to yield to my convictions, and,—to use a common phrase,—lead a religious life. I began to read the Bible and religious books and to pray for light and help; gave up my business, and soon entered the ministry of the church in which I had been trained since early boyhood, the teachings of which appealed to my reason in contrast to the Calvinistic theology to which many of my kindred adhered.

IS GRADUALLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE NEW TRUTH.

I continued to preach what was known as Arminian theology for about thirty years, though during the latter half of that period, many of my views were modified, partly from study and coming in contact with people of broader views than those of my own creed; and in part by changes in my religious experience, of which I have never spoken; and by your experiences and conflicts; and later, by reading the collateral works of the New Church, and last of all the writings, by which I was gradually prepared to abandon the "orthodox" churches and their faith, and accept and teach, as far as I understood them, the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem; in the acceptance of which had come an interpretation of the Bible that satisfied both my reason and my affections.

JOINS THE ORGANIZED CHURCH.

I will not dwell long on my connection with the organized church in the natural world. For a time my relations were all I could ask. I received a cordial welcome from ministers, and the enthusiastic support of the little flock to which I ministered. Later dissensions arose that almost broke my heart. In a new field, the apathy and indifference to what had been to me such soul-stirring messages from heaven, chilled and disheartened me, and I gradually seemed to lose my hold on and interest in life. This feeling increased little by little, until I felt I had lost the power of expression by pen or tongue; and tried to give myself to patient waiting for the change of worlds, by which I hoped to be delivered from my helpless and burdensome life.

* * * * *

It is proper that I now give an account of my entrance

into the spiritual world and the experiences that followed. I had been expecting the change called "death" in the natural world for several years, and looking forward to it hopefully as a release from the infirmities and limitations that toward the last rendered me helpless and passive, dependent entirely upon the ministrations of my indulgent and over-burdened family. Of this I had been only partially conscious for some months; and toward the last, not at all.

My awakening was very sweet,—at first into partial consciousness, when I became aware of the presence of my son, who had *gone from me (as I then thought)*,—a little boy, and had grown to manhood in the spiritual world and had become my guardian angel during the later years of my life on earth, and of whose presence I had at times been distinctly conscious.

When I came to realize that I had been released from my house of clay, as I called my infirm body, and felt something of the vigor of restored life, my thought turned to my family with the longing that they might share in this larger, freer life, and I exclaimed, "If M—— and the children were only here!" but was checked by the remark, "They have not been brought here, and so it must be best that they remain on the lower plane for the present, and you can be most useful to them by first finding your place and work and in all things conforming to the order established by the Lord for the development of a truly human and angelic life.

Will you not, as the first step, rise from your couch, bathe and dress; then come with me to view the glories of the rising sun and the beauties of the early morning? For

thus are the inhabitants of heaven accustomed to begin the day."

I sank back upon the couch on which I found myself lying and said, "I have neither strength nor inclination to get up and bathe. I have been for such a long time disabled that I cannot hope to be able at once to get up and move about, but must feel my way gradually, as my strength comes back."

My attendant replied, "That you have been disabled lacking the proper use of your faculties, I know, and have often wondered why you were held so long in the prison of your body, when you were so little to that life and so much to this and to me. By yielding to the delusion that you could not use your faculties and must wait to be acted upon and lifted out of your body, you have formed a plane of thought that disables you from entering into the enjoyments and activities of the spiritual world, as it did from continuing in the uses and pleasures the Lord has provided for his children in the natural world.

Therefore it must be as you say; and if you will permit, I will assist you to bathe and dress, so that you can be taken into the air and sunshine, by which your energies will be renewed."

He then did for me what most persons entering this world find strength and pleasure in doing for themselves; then led me to the door, where a light conveyance, or chair on wheels, was ready to receive me, and I was taken into a pleasant ground or garden, where the balmy air and beautiful trees and flowers refreshed my spirit, and I felt more vigor and inclination to exertion than I had done, though the water of my bath had produced the same feeling.

I soon said I would try to walk, which pleased my guide, who accommodated his step to mine, and we walked for a short time along the paths of the garden. Then I said, "Is it not time to go home? Do you live near this place?"

He answered, "Not very near, and you are not able to make the journey there; but we will find a place where you will be cared for until you are stronger and can bear more of change than at present you are ready for."

We saw not far away a comfortable, homelike place, and to this I was taken. As we approached the house, my guide asked of a man we met coming from the veranda that surrounded the building, "Have you a room ready and can you provide an attendant to take the care of and wait upon a frail and helpless man; or rather, one who thinks himself such?"

The man smiled, and answered, "You know our accommodations adjust themselves to meet the wants of all who seek entrance within our doors. Come with me." He led the way to a pleasant room, furnished with couch and easy chairs, and adjoining a bathing place, through which water continually flowed. He pointed to this with the remark, "Our friend will find the frequent use of this most beneficial."

When the man who brought us in had gone, I asked with some anxiety, like a child, "You will not go away and leave me?"

"Not at present; not until you are willing to be left; but in this world every one has his particular place and work, and we do not linger, nor absent ourselves from this, unless there is some special use to be performed thereby. The Lord's kingdom is a kingdom of uses, and all His servants

find full employment for every faculty, and their happiness in the activity to which this leads. There are none who seek seclusion, except for the purpose of fitting themselves for renewed labor. To learn to work for others and in harmony with others is a first and important lesson to be learned by all who would enter the service and kingdom of heaven.

"I will remain, if you desire, and give you some account of the way I have been brought to see that all hereditary inclinations must be resisted in so far as they incline us to prefer our own ease and comfort rather than to mingle with others, both in their labors for the general good, and also in social recreations that tend to cultivate cheerfulness, exhilaration, strength of body and elasticity of spirit; a disposition to share with others whatever we may possess of ingenuity in device or skill in execution.

HIS SON TELLS HOW HE HIMSELF WAS TRAINED OUT OF MORBID AND ABNORMAL STATES.

"I was of a shrinking, timid disposition, inclined to solitude, and had never been used to playing with other children, except in a very quiet way. To correct this many devices were used by my kind and gentle mother (as I soon called the one who cared for me during my first states of life after coming into this world) to divert and amuse me,—principally the company of other children, who invited me to join in their plays. I was encouraged to swim in water, ride in boats and on ponies,—things I at first shrank from, because every thing that has been impressed upon our minds in the natural world clings to us, and what is not in harmony with angelic life is corrected gradually, as we are able to see and give it up by our own choice.

"We are taught that the Lord is our Father; that He loves us and wishes us to be free from fear, and happy in the enjoyment of the things He has provided for us, and that we show our gratitude when we do this and do what we can to make others happy. I soon learned to enjoy the beautiful things about me, and the plays of other children, who welcomed me and were happy to have me with them.

"It has been in this way that I have grown into a useful and happy manhood, and am able to help those who are timid and shrinking, into the enjoyment of their inheritance. The Lord is pleased and honored," he continued, "not by fearfulness, but by trust, and the happy and grateful use of his bounties.

IS LEFT TO REFLECTION.

"I will go now for a time and leave you to reflect upon what I have said, and to try to adjust yourself to the new conditions. You have but to call and any assistance you may need will be given at once."

What had been said acted as a stimulant, and I at once arose and began to move about the room. I did not want to see any one, and so was left alone, and began to consider that I must have been brought up with wrong ideas about many questions, and that by confirming myself in them, and ordering my life and that of my family according to these, I had made many mistakes and imposed hardships where I had meant to be prudent and kind. I saw, too, where a selfish aversion to change and to interruption to my reading and study had shut me away from usefully mingling with other people and joining in efforts to better the life of the community in which I lived.

One line of thought suggested others; until, thoroughly wearied and in deep dejection, I sought my couch and fell

into a deep sleep, from which I woke somewhat refreshed ; and remembering the advice about the use of the water near by, resolved to try a bath, to which, at first, I felt averse because of the exertion required ; but when I had disrobed and was in the water, I enjoyed it thoroughly. I thought there must be some virtue in this water and I would use it frequently.

Seating myself in an easy chair after the bath and looking about, I saw some books near ; and taking one from a table, examined the cover and binding, and was startled by the title, which was, "The Dangers of Reading too Much." I opened the book, and turning over the leaves, read the headings of the different chapters. One was, "It leads to the love of and habit of solitude, whereas man's fullest development is gained by association with his fellow-man, both in the acquirement and use of practical learning and general intelligence."

I did not look farther than this, but read the illustrations and application of this one caption, and was satisfied that I had made a great mistake in the estimate placed upon the relative value and the time I had given to favorite authors, upon whose works I spent hours without any definite purpose except the delight I felt in the style and matter of the writer. This I saw to have been a selfish delight ; though much reading, I had thought, would better fit me for the use I never lost sight of entirely,—that of a public speaker and teacher of religious truth, in all the later years of life. But much time had been given to solitary reading that would have been more usefully employed in greater bodily activity, for which this made me more and more disinclined and in a sense unfitted or disabled.

One by one other habits of self-indulgence, which had

never been regarded as such, but as necessities, came up to be seen in their right relation and effects. While there was no undue severity in the exposure of these things, there was no palliation of any departure from the path marked out by Him who had given the admonition, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye DO them." The influx of evil spirits is invited by these indulgences. They take advantage of all such openings to enslave and torment their victims by suggesting false causes of fear, and inflict on them various nervous disorders and forebodings that cannot be described. The only remedy is a manly resistance, through faith in the Lord's Omnipotence, and taking and using the weapons of revealed truth to combat every suggestion of inability and infirmity that renders one a slave to any appetite or habit detrimental to his fullest liberty and usefulness in the field where Providence has placed him. The body should be in entire subjection to the rational man, and this in turn to the spiritual.

Of course in the disordered condition of man's hereditary nature, this cannot come without discipline and effort, and this in proportion to the strength given to the lower nature by wrong teaching and bad living on the part of ancestors. The possession of inclinations weak and disordered does not condemn; but when the intellect has been enlightened, the obligation to compel obedience on the part of the external man becomes imperative. Living according to one's perception of true and perfect manhood may not be attained at once; but falling short of this and excusing in one's self the things that prevent it, bring sooner or later bitter and unavailing regret that can only be relieved by the compassionate Saviour who has so linked our lives into one great whole that each bruised and wounded feeling finds a com-

pensating joy in its capacity to administer to the relief of other stricken hearts.

It would not be useful to dwell upon the details of my own experiences; but having stated the general principles upon which they were founded, will add that weeks and months of conflict followed, during which I was left alone, except as I sought the aid or advice of some one to whom I was guided, or who came to inquire as to my needs. Everything was provided for my comfort, and plenty of books on various subjects were ranged in order around my room, but I had no heart to read. I had a great longing to undo much of my past, to atone to my family for not having given them more of companionship and sympathy; for not having been more patient with my children, and guided their activities into useful, happy ways, instead of repressing what annoyed and disturbed my quiet. I made myself responsible for any evil results which might follow, and prayed the Lord to protect them from the paths of the destroyer, and that I might be allowed to suffer instead of them.

I also blamed myself for allowing my love of seclusion to prevent my entering more into sympathy with the youth in the churches of my charges and going about among the people to relieve, warm, encourage and comfort, as there was need.

You have heard me say that I shrank from a crowd and remember that I could not be persuaded to enter the grounds of the Columbian Exposition, where was gathered so much of the excellent in nature and art. This I now see to have been a very morbid and unhealthy state of mind and tending to moroseness and gloom, the opposite of the free and joyous intercourse and sympathy that is cultivated and prac-

ticed in all the heavens, where each delights to contribute to the happiness of all, and derives his happiness in turn from association with his fellows. This was one of the many mistakes of my life.

* * * * *

After some time I thought I would go out and see if there might not be people in this world to whom I might in some way minister; so I asked one of the helpers in the house where I was sheltered if there were people near who needed help of any kind, or if I could be useful in the house. I was asked what use I preferred to serve or do; and I replied, "Anything by which people can be saved from falling into a selfish and evil life and can be stimulated to do the best they know."

"Then," said he, "I will call the superintendent and you can talk with him."

I told him the history and mistakes of my own life without reserve, and that I wanted to be prepared to undo, as far as possible, any results that might have injured or hindered others.

"But I see," he said, "you have not wilfully violated your conscience, nor followed worldly aims and ambitions; that you have been true and loyal in the great matters of life,—a true husband, a loyal citizen, and faithful in teaching the truth as you were given to see it. That you have not always lived up to your highest conceptions of what duty required need not prevent you from entering on a larger, truer, happier life, since you are willing to see and amend the faults of the past."

"But," I said, "I can never undo the wrong to my children. Great sorrows may come to them, and I have not

given them a true conception of what God meant fatherhood to be, in tenderness, sympathy, companionship.

The man (or angel, for such he was) comforted me, or attempted to, by saying, "And yet I see that you were willing to make any sacrifice to secure the comfort and well-being of your family. The Lord foresaw all that would come to them and to you, and has so arranged that nothing is permitted but that a compensating good may be secured to all concerned. Otherwise the Divine Providence would fail in its ultimate purpose of forming a heaven of happy angels who have been rescued from evil habits and evil environments of every kind. If you will trust to His mercy and guidance, I am sure you will come to see that His mercy is sufficient for all your needs and covers all possible contingencies; that everything has been foreseen and provision made to meet it when the time is come for its manifestation. Now give your attention wholly to the development of your normal powers and capacities by the exercise of your faculties in the ways provided here; mingle in the societies arranged for conversation, for debate, for athletic contests, running, climbing and rowing; in games; in music; in swimming and dancing. There will be opportunities given for graver duties, and then you will have strength and courage to meet them. Without these what could you do to assist or reclaim others?

So I began an entirely new kind of life, not forgetting the past, but by degrees trusting it to the Lord's mercy. I found many companions who had led a sorrowful, oppressed life in the world, because of wrong views of the divine government, shutting themselves in from happiness by forebodings of evil in the future, as well as gloomy views

of the present; looking at the sin and suffering, rather than at the mercy that overshadows all.

I will speak of some experiences I had before I left the "Sanitarium" (which is a good term to express the nature of the place where I spent my first year or state; for after I began preaching or teaching in public assemblies, a house was given me in the city, where I had books and rooms to receive visitors, beside private rooms and bath).

As I said before, there were many that came there who had led a sorrowful life in the world,—more from their inward state than from outward conditions; some who had what is termed *melancholia*. These were often kept for a time in a comatose state, where delightful visions and dreams were insinuated by attendant angels; and most cheerful pictures and views presented with returning consciousness. As often as the former states returned, some diversion was provided, in which was a lesson suggestive of hope and trust, showing how good is brought out of and overcomes evil. In these and other ways were the old forebodings left behind, and new states of hope and peace established, and activity in useful ways for the relief of others stimulated.

* * * * *

At first there was much of compulsion in my endeavors to simulate a joyous, happy life, such as I was told the Lord desired me to lead; that it was a reflection upon His government and providence for any one to bemoan and regret even his own errors; but rather make them stepping-stones on which to rise into a fuller, better future. And so I tried to do, following the instructions of those I could not doubt had come from heaven to teach and lead us into a larger life;

plained. Will you not continue, or come again, when we can hear more?"

This was the beginning of my public ministry in this world.

As you are told in the Writings, there are innumerable societies in the heavens, and also in the world of spirits intermediate between heaven and earth, and each has its peculiar function; those in the intermediate world connected with one or all of the heavens by the acknowledgement of the Lord in His Divine Humanity are continually perfecting in knowledge and also in wisdom and love and its uses multiplied.

Our society is founding a new school, where teachers of the Word will be fitted for their work among those wholly ignorant, or those who come from the Christian world without any knowledge of the laws of spiritual life. Those who have lived and worked among such in the natural world, after being instructed here, make the most efficient teachers in the school and often the most useful missionaries.

I think I told you that our friend, Mr M——— was actively engaged in the work of establishing this school; that he was visiting other institutions of like kind or that had been established for a like purpose; and had gathered in several hundreds, as many as we have at present teachers to instruct. Everything is done according to the law of use, and it has been found that beyond a certain limit difficulties arise that are not easy to control.

My work is not so much with students as with the more mixed congregations,—visitors and inquirers after light on specific questions. Also I have frequent individual calls to other places, and to persons not connected with this community where is my home.

I have been promoted from time to time to positions of more responsibility and into surroundings more in harmony with my highest ideals of beauty; also into regions where the sunshine of heaven is more perceptible,—that is, into greater warmth and light. I have been privileged to speak to vast assemblies and many constantly attend where I minister; but I do not find my delight so much in this as in the daily contact with congenial friends, and in the help we as a society are able to give to inquiring ones who are seeking the light of the internal sense of the Word.

Mr. M—— has described our location and surroundings, i. e.,—the buildings and facilities for instructing others and for our own growth in wisdom; so I will not dwell upon this.* One thing I want to tell you is about our library. We have all the literature of earth which is worthy to be called such,—treatises on metaphysics; the fables of the ancients; the proverbs of the wise of ancient times; descriptions of the formations of the heavens and the starry universe; so that there is the widest latitude given to the searching into what are called the mysteries of Creation, Preservation and Redemption.

March 21, 1907. The day is mild and beautiful with you, though the earth is mostly brown; but preparation is being made for the planting and growth of seeds. With us it is always springtime, unless we turn away from the Source of life to the love of the gifts rather than the Giver.

I thought to speak further today of our employments and manner of life, though it is not easy to picture these in earthly language, as they are similar only by correspondence. As you have been told in the matter of eating, so it

* See Pages 167-168.

is in clothing, in going from place to place, i. e., progression or succession of states; so also in retiring and arising as into a new day. We have great variety, each new state bringing new delights and satisfactions, so there is no weariness amounting to lassitude or exhaustion, frequent recreations preventing our falling into this state. It is a great mistake to regard these and play-spells as a waste of time when used in right preparation and with a view to greater efficiency in the duties of one's calling. They are as useful and necessary as sleep is in the natural world in restoring wasted energies and fitting one for new service.

ADDENDA 1913.

Since the above series of conversations was ended there has been continual growth and enlargement along the same lines of work.

There has been no important change among the leaders of the "social center" and founders of the school for the instruction of teachers.

Many still residing here are interested and efficient helpers in other places of instruction, and for the improvement of conditions provided for the newly arrived from the Christian districts or countries of the earth.

Several of us have loved ones still on the earth plane, for whose coming we wait, before desiring any change for ourselves.

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